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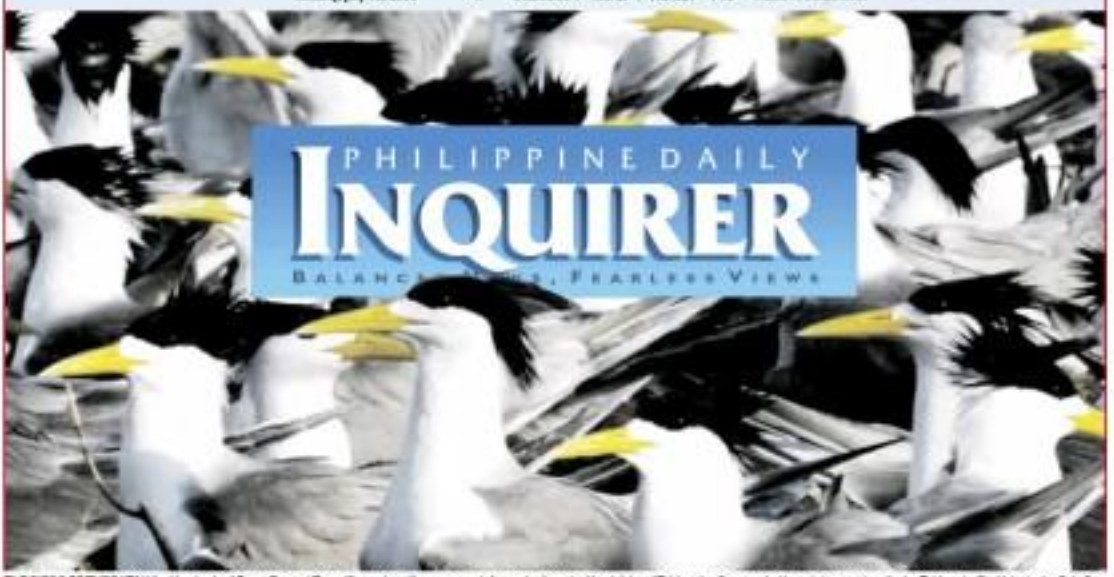

THE BIRDS OF TUBBATAHA Hundreds of Great Crested Terns (Sterna bergii) nest on newly formed soil on the North Islet of Tubbataha. Surrounded by pristine coral reefs, the Tubbataha Bird Islet in the Sulu Sea is not only a haven for sea birds, but also for nesting sea turtles and fish as well.

More kids out of school

Providing education for all eludes RP gov't

By Michelle V. Rosca and Beverly T. Natividad

ONE IN SIX SCHOOL-AGE CHILDREN IS BEING deprived of education and the number is rising steadily, the National Statistical Coordination Board (NSCB) said yesterday, indicating that the country is still far from its goal of providing education to all.

The percentage of children enrolled in primary school was down to 83 percent in the 2006-2007 school year from 90 percent five years earlier, the NSCB said in a study according to Agence France-Presse (AFP).

The numbers are even worse for secondary education at 59 percent, though they have been steady over five years, AFP said.

President Macapagal-Arroyo acknowledged last month that the rising cost of food and energy may be pricing education out of the reach of some Filipino families. She ordered schools not to require their students to wear uniforms to reduce the cost.

Education Secretary Jesli Lapuz yesterday said the Department of Education (Deped) was aware of the problems and was "squarely addressing the situation."

But he also said that the latest survey for school year 2007-2008 showed an improvement with a participation rate of 85 percent.

MORE KIDS A-15

Miss Venezuela takes Miss Universe crown

POISE UNDER PRESSURE Dayana Mendoza of Venezuela (above) smiles after being crowned Miss Universe 2008 on Monday. The annual pageant was marked by the spectacle of Miss USA, Crystle Stewart of Texas (right), tripping on the train of her bejeweled evening gown as she made her entrance. AFP

NHA TRANG, VIETNAM—Miss Venezuela was crowned Miss Universe 2008 on Monday in a contest marked by the spectacle of Miss USA falling down during the evening gown competition for the second year in a row.

The new Miss Universe, Dayana Mendoza, was once kidnapped in her homeland and says the experience taught her to remain poised under pressure.

Tension got under the skin of Miss USA, Crystle Stewart of Texas, who tripped on the train of her bejeweled evening gown as she made her entrance.

During the 2007 Miss Universe contest in Mexico City, Miss USA Rachel Smith also stumbled during the evening gown competition and became an unintended star on YouTube, where the video was shown over and over again.

At a news conference after

MISS VENEZUELA A-6

Church population stand called 'parochial'

TWO SENATORS YESTERDAY defended Congress' move to legislate population control programs, with Sen. Pia Cayetano describing as "parochial" the Catholic Church's reading of the reproductive health bills.

Lacson is the author of Senate Bill No. 43 which encourages the adoption of a reproductive health and population management council to oversee the country's family planning program.

"Advocating population management is not being anti-life. In fact, it is procuring and propagating. To claim it is suitable without carefully studying its provisions would be parochial and downright stupid," Lacson said in a statement.

He was referring to a pastoral

CHURCH A-13

Human rights chief chides PNP

By Alcuin Papa

SAYING MEMORIES OF TIGER IPAT ABUSES refused to die, Commission on Human Rights (CHR) Chair Leila de Lima yesterday chided the police for still being the No. 1 human rights violators in the country.

In a visit to Camp Crame, De Lima also deplored the police practice of staging media presentations of crime suspects—usually garbed in orange T-shirts with the word "Detainee" printed on them—even if they had not been found guilty and were presented to be tormented.

De Lima virtually walked into the lion's den

HUMAN A-13

PCG: Skipper said he'd use another route

By Lalla B. Salaverria, Christian V. Esguerra and Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

THE BOARD OF MARINE INQUIRY (BMI) yesterday heard testimony that the captain of the capsized MV Princess of the Stars had informed the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) that he was using another route to Cebu, away from the path of an approaching typhoon.

Cmdr. Erwin Balogue, head of the

PCG-SKIPPER A-6

Angry protesters raid oil firm in Makati

By DJ Yap and Inquirer Southern Luzon

DOZENS OF PROTESTERS yesterday hurled paint bombs and sprayed protest messages on the façade of the Pilipinas Shell building in Makati City to demonstrate their outrage over continuing oil price increases.

Led by Bagong Alyansang Makabayan, some 100 protesters stormed to the Shell building on Makati Street in Salcedo Village and threw plastic bags filled with blue textile paint on the front wall.

Others sprayed messages like "Oust Gloria" and "No to oil price hikes" in bold orange and red paint on the wall of the building.

Helpless, the three security guards could only watch from

ANGRY A-13

PUBLIC ANGER A protester throws a plastic bag filled with blue textile paint at the façade of the Pilipinas Shell building in Makati City on Monday to demonstrate his outrage at continuing oil price increases. RICHARD

Aussies give Pope kitten to keep him company

SYDNEY—CATLOVING Pope Benedict XVI has been given a kitten to keep him company while he relaxes and plays the piano ahead of World Youth Day in Australia, Church insiders told Agence France-Presse on Monday.

The Pontiff, an avid feline fan whose home in

AUSSIES A-15

ABS-CBN airs kidnap video shot secretly

A PHILIPPINE TV NETWORK HAS broadcast videos shot secretly by one of its crews while they were being held by suspected Abu Sayyaf bandits, offering a glimpse into their jungle ordeal including threats to behead one of them.

ABS-CBN aired the videos late Sunday in a documentary titled "Kidnap," partly to help police in Jolo island identify the kidnappers of news anchor Ces Drilon and two cameramen, who were released last month after ransom

ABS-CBN AIRS A-13

A1 PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER TUESDAY, JULY 15, 2008

WEATHER FORECAST

Metro Manila	Rain	Subic/Clark	Partly Cloudy
Baguio	Rain	Batanes	Partly Cloudy
Tuguegarao	Rain	Tabuk	Partly Cloudy
Laoag	Rain	Dagupan	Partly Cloudy
Cam. Norte	Rain	Cam. Sur	Partly Cloudy
Legazpi	Rain	Catarman	Partly Cloudy
Iloilo	Thunderstorms	Cagayan de Oro	Partly Cloudy
Cebu	Rain	Zamboanga	Partly Cloudy
Davao	Partly Cloudy	Puerto Princesa	Partly Cloudy

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Probe newsman's murder, RP urged

UN body says killing journalists 'intolerable violation of basic human right'

By Cynthia D. Balana

THE UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIific and Cultural Organization (Unesco) has condemned the murder of Filipino journalist Robert Sison and called on Philippine authorities to step up the protection of media professionals in the country.

Unesco Director General Koïchiro Matsuura said the targeting of journalists represented "an intolerable violation of the basic human right of freedom of expression."

Sison was the second journalist killed in the Philippines this year and the 54th since 2001.

Sison, 60, host of a local radio program and a columnist of the weekly "Bagkong Bulletin" in Subaya, Quezon, was gunned down by motorcycle-riding men while driving home on June 30.

In a statement posted on the UN website, Matsuura called on the Philippine government to fully investigate the killing of Sison and to increase protection for journalists.

The New York-based Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) has also called on the government to bring Sison's killers to justice.

CPJ executive director Joel Simon noted in a statement posted on the CPJ website that the Philippines ranked among the deadliest nations for journalists.

Neil's call

Vice President Noli de Castro, meanwhile, urged journalists to continue to fight against poverty-ravaged injustice.

Speaking at the 17th Annual Conference of the Asian Media Information and Communication Unit Center (AMIC) in Manila, De Castro said poverty and injustice were spread mainly as the absence of compassion and generosity.

"Many people wallow in homelessness and abject poverty because other sectors have refused to share from their abundance. Many people have been suffer from abuse and discrimination because other sectors have refused to exercise compassion toward those who are weak and underprivileged," De Castro said.

De Castro, a broadcast journalist for three decades before joining politics, said media's role and mission never to keep shaking societies and governments out of their complacency and to remind them that the only way to achieve the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) was through a collective sense of compassion and generosity.

"This is your unchanging and timeless role," he stressed.

De Castro praised the Islamic for poverty and injustice as the "self-centeredness" of powerful global business interests.

"Because of this, many people even

I got job on merit, says new ERC head

By Abigail L. Ho and Gil Cabunoguan

ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION Chief Arnulfo Ducut yesterday denied allegations of a "dynasty" in President Macapagal-Arroyo and her family saying she got her new post because of her qualifications.

"We just come from the same town," Ducut said.

Both Ducut and Ms Arroyo hail from Lubao in Pampanga.

"I applied for this position and was chosen based on my qualifications. I'm a lawyer by profession, and I've been in the practice of law for more than 10 years, which is a requirement to become a chairman of this commission. Aside from that, I have my credentials to speak of. I've been with the legislative, judicial and executive branches of the government," she said.

Still, two senators yesterday urged the President to recall Ducut's appointment due to a possible conflict of interest.

Senators Richard Gordon and Panfilo Lacson said that Ducut would be in a conflict of interest situation if an ERC head she would be made to regulate the National Power Corp. (Napocor), which awarded in March its biggest coal purchase contract to Tanauan-based Consolidated Resources Inc. whose registered owners were linked to Ducut.

Gordon said the President should have asked her advisers to conduct a more thorough check of her nominees before appointees such as the ERC. "She should have asked her nominees, did you do anything that could embarrass me? Do you have relatives who could?" he said.

Lacson said that with Ms Arroyo choosing who her next successor would be in the power sector, the public should continue to be vigilant to check abuses like the high-priced coal purchases of Napocor and the numerous oil exploration contracts in Palawan awarded to a little-known company (Energasia Global Exploration Corp.) owned by an architect of the President.

Ducut said her legal practice was mostly confined to Pampanga. She started as a legal researcher in 1992, then became branch clerk of court in 1993 and research attorney and prosecuting fiscal in 1996, all in the capital town of San Fernando.

She started her political career in 1991 when she was elected councilor of Lubao and then congresswoman in 1995.

Prior to being appointed ERC chair, she was deputy chief under the President's legal counsel, Sergio Apostol.

Asked if her familiarity with people in Malacañang and Congress could result in her being pressured into making decisions that would not necessarily be what is best for the power sector, she said the ERC would remain impartial and independent with her at the helm.

"(My) familiarity and closeness may be true, but I have a duty to uphold. My duty as chairwoman of this commission is to uphold the independence of this body. Be assured, this is a quasi-judicial regulatory body, so we will abide by its mandate. There may be friends, but we have one duty to the public," she said.

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Quakes rock Batanes, Davao

A MAGNITUDE-6 EARTHquake struck the northernmost islands of Batanes Sunday night, followed 12 hours later by a weaker tremor off Davao del Norte in Mindanao, the Philippine Institute for Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs) reported yesterday.

Phivolcs said the northern quake, centered about 113 kilometers northeast of Basco, Batanes, occurred at 10:50 p.m. It was felt in intensity 2 on Sinait Island. No casualties or damages were reported.

The Davao quake, with a magnitude of 4.1, was monitored 28 km southeast of Tagum City in Davao del Norte at 11:35 a.m. It was felt at intensity 3 in Compostela Valley and intensity 2 in Davao City.

Phivolcs Director Renato Solidum Jr. said the quakes were within the normal range.

Phivolcs monitors an average of 20 quakes daily across the country but only five or three are felt in a week.

Movements in the northern Luzon trough, Solidum said, may have triggered the Batanes tremor, while the quake in the Davao region was more likely generated by the Philippine fault zone cutting Mindanao.

"They are not interrelated and these are normal earthquakes," Solidum told the Inquirer by phone yesterday.

"What we are observing are very small to moderate earthquakes considering that the [displacement] are offshore," Solidum said. *Jocelyn Uy, Jobert Lembalo, Inquirer Northern Luzon; Primalyn Lim, Inquirer Mindanao*

PHILHEALTH CIRCULAR
No. 2... , 2008
TO: ALL ACCREDITED HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS, PHILHEALTH OFFICES AND MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL HEALTH INSURANCE PROGRAM
SUBJECT: Clarification on PhilHealth Circular No. 2-2007 re: Submission of Statement of Account
PHILHEALTH CORPORATION
1) The Official Receipt as stated in the first paragraph of the said Circular is required as an attachment to the claim application. The act of facilitate reimbursement to the member in case there are remaining benefits after PhilHealth's reimbursement of benefits to respective facilities, or the absence of Official Receipts or its equivalent due to/or which shall not be presented but the reimbursement to the member shall be reduced subject to submission of the said document and corresponding request for adjustment within sixty (60) days from the date of receipt of PhilHealth check/e payment advice.
2) In case the member cannot submit the original Official Receipt, the following may be submitted together with the Statement of Account:
– Certified True Copy with original signature of hospital billing clerk, if issuing signatory is submitted to the PhilHealth office upon presentation of the original OR; and
– Hospital waiver
This shall be applicable for reimbursements covered in case or related to HEMs or Circumcision/Newborn, with the corresponding amount covered indicated in the OR for the particular case.
3) Effective upon the issuance of this Circular, and for submission of claims for reimbursement of OR in all claims applications from all health care providers regardless of category.
4) However, in case hospital charges were issued with a permanent note from the member, copy of the letter shall be attached to the claim application.
5) Additional reminders for submission of OR shall include all claim applications for packages belonging Cases Packages, Partitioned Delivery, DOTS, Acute Flaccid Paralysis. In the event that a member complains of some deduction of benefits or request for adjustment, the facility/hospital shall be obliged to assist and provide the necessary documents to facilitate processing of members request. Further, if the package was not availed or not by PhilHealth to the facility/hospital, should there be services covered by the package but purchased or paid for separately by the patient/member, the facility/hospital shall refund to the member the cost for such services.
Please be guided accordingly.
(Sgd.) LORNA G. TOLENTINO
Acting President and CEO
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'Biofuels not to blame for food crisis'

By Abigail L. Ho

THE US NATIONAL BIOFUEL Board and the Manila-based Asian Institute of Petroleum Studies Inc. (Aipet) have both defended claims that global biofuels developments was adversely affecting the food supply and causing food prices to rise steeply.

"The research done by US experts and the US Department of Agriculture has proven that biofuels-related feedstock demand has limited impact on the global food supply and pricing," US NBB chief executive Joe John said.

"The presence of biofuels in the market, in fact, was helping keep US gas prices—now at more than $4 a gallon—from going even higher, amid skyrocketing prices in the world market," John said.

For his part, Aipet managing director Rafael Diaz said that on a global basis, biofuels production was eating up less than 10 percent of the global food supply. This was hardly enough to make a dent on overall supply and to drive food prices up.

The food versus fuel debate was reminiscent when applied to the Philippines, he said, since the country, unlike the United States, was not using corn as a feedstock for ethanol production nor as a base for biodiesel manufacturing.

"In my 4 to 5 no impact [on the food supply] is noticed, but to pass on mostly the whole problem of food supply and prices as being the result of biofuels (development and production) is outright ridiculous," Diaz said in a statement issued yesterday.

Both John and Diaz were reacting to the recently released Gallagher Report from the United Kingdom, to which Renewable Fuels Agency chair Sir Gallagher said first-generation biofuels had the potential of increasing greenhouse gas emissions instead of reducing them, and also drive up food prices worldwide.

Diaz cited the case of actual biodiesel demand and production in the country as an example.

For the current requirement of a 1-percent biodiesel blend (B1), he said the country only needed around 60 million to 70 million liters of the alternative fuel each year, considering the diesel demand of between 6 billion and 7 billion liters.

By 2009, when the mandate for the 2-percent biodiesel blend (B2) takes effect, he said, biodiesel demand would go up to between 122 million and 134 million liters.

"From corn oil production of 1.4 billion liters per year, more or less, the biodiesel component will translate to just 1 to 1 percent for B1 and 0.18 percent for B2," Diaz explained.

The B1 and eventually B2 requirements, therefore, represented less than 10 percent of the country's total coconut oil production each year, "so it would be obvious that the demand in coco oil price cannot be totally attributed to biodiesel," he said.

"In my own view, the excellence of coconut as a health food and as a fuel additive to mitigate global warming and air pollution has created new high-volume demand and is seen as a threat to supply availability by the traditional users of coconut oil," Diaz said.

Apart from the manufacture of fuel additives, coconut oil is currently being used in the production of health supplements, such as the popular virgin coconut oil, detergents, skin care products, cosmetics and specialty confectionaries.

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THE ATENEO BRAND
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UN agency helps tillers in 54 poor nations cope

By Amy R. Borras

THE UNITED NATIONS FOOD AND AGRIculture Organization (FAO) has approved $27 million worth of projects to 49 more countries, including the Philippines, to help small farmers mitigate the effects of rising farm input costs and high food prices.

This brings to 54 the total number of country beneficiaries the FAO has included in its Initiative on Soaring Food Prices (ISFP), the agency said.

Six countries—Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Haiti, Mauritania, Mozambique and Senegal—were the initial beneficiaries of FAO projects worth nearly $2.8 million.

The projects funded under FAO's Technical Cooperation Program will provide farmers with agricultural inputs for one year, beginning this month.

"The immediate objective of these projects is to ensure the success of the next planting season and, in the longer term, demonstrate that by increasing the supply of key agricultural inputs, like seeds and fertilizer, small farmers will be able to rapidly increase their food production," FAO said in a statement.

Increased production, in turn, would cushion the impact of high food prices on the small farmers, who have to buy some of their food from the market, the UN agency noted.

"[It] would, hopefully, lead to surplus production that could be sold, increasing their income and facilitating the access to food of the rural and urban populations," FAO said.

Agency experts said the program was also intended to encourage governments, financial institutions and donors to support the farmers on a much larger scale.

The ISFP is intended to produce a "salutary catalytic effect that will encourage donor/government action to contribute to similar projects, but on a larger scale," FAO said.

Aside from the Philippines, the 47 other countries that will receive FAO aid are Afghanistan, Angola, Armenia, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Congo, Djibouti, Dominica, Eritrea, Grenada, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Guyana, Honduras, Jamaica, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, DPR Korea, Lesotho, Madagascar, Mali, Mongolia, Nigeria, Nepal, Nicaragua, Pakistan, Rwanda, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia and the Grenadines, Sierra Leone, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Timor-Leste, Togo, Yemen and Zambia.

Workers urge gov't to prepare for OFWs' return

WORRIED OVER THE POSSIBLE DISplacement of overseas Filipino workers due to the economic slump that has affected some key countries, a labor group yesterday called on the government to take strong measures to protect OFWs from economic dislocation.

The Trade Union Congress of the Philippines (TUCP) said the government should closely monitor the number of OFWs who would be laid off as foreign employers choose to downsize on labor costs or decide to replace them with locals.

For instance, there could be a possible displacement of workers in Taiwan since relations between the island and mainland China have begun to warm up. The TUCP noted that there were at present some 90,000 Filipino workers in Taiwan.

"Taiwan employers reportedly prefer workers from the mainland over Filipinos in consideration of lower wages given to the Chinese," said TUCP spokesperson Alex Agatlan.

The group was also alarmed over the intense crackdown on illegal migrants by the Malaysian government as well as the Department of Labor and Employment's (DOLE) announcement that the demand for Filipino workers in the United States has been going down.

"We expect that a good number of OFWs employed in various countries will feel the pinch of the international economic glut that is fueled by the crises on petroleum and food prices. What is happening in the US market is a good indicator of this," Agatlan said in a statement.

He added: "If the trend continues, migrant workers will be forced to go home in big numbers and it is always good to plan for contingencies."

The TUCP identified the business process outsourcing industry as a possible "safe haven" for returning OFWs.

"While the call center industry has been affected by the slowing of the US economy, it still commands good prospects for growth," Agatlan said. Margarita C. Ortiz

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7 decomposing bodies found off Sorsogon

LEGAZPI CITY—SIXTEEN BODIES believed to be those of passengers of the ill-fated MV Princess of the Stars were recovered on the shores of several coastal towns of Sorsogon on Sunday, a Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) official reported yesterday.

Ensign Jeffrey Collado, PCG-Bicol operations assistant, said three of the bodies were found in Barangay Bebia in Magallanes town around 9 a.m. One of the bodies was headless, while another was that of a woman.

Three others were recovered in Barangay Maculapa in Castilla. One was identified through documents in his wallet as Collin Balonzo, 26, of San Isidro, Leyte; another was a woman wearing a life jacket; and the third was a man wearing a bracelet.

At around 11 a.m., a decomposing headless body was found in Barangay Macondo in Bulan and was later buried at the municipal cemetery.

The Princess of the Stars, owned by Sulpicio Lines Inc., capsized and sank off Sibuyan Island in Romblon on June 21 when the ferry sailed into the path of Typhoon "Frank" with more than 800 passengers and crew.

Retrieval mission

The National Disaster Coordinating Council (NDCC) says more than 50 passengers have been rescued, the last on June 22, but search-and-retrieval operations and over 100 bodies retrieved off Sibuyan Island and in nearby provinces.

On Saturday, a woman's body was found in Matalabac town in Camarines Sur. The victim, about 25 years old, was found wearing a blouse with spaghetti straps on Friday night, according to Chief Insp. Benjamin Siparin, Minalabac police chief. Her head was reported to be missing.

Three more bodies—all in advanced stages of decomposition—were recovered by the Navy from the shore of Donsol town in Camarines Sur on Thursday afternoon, Ensign Elmer Raimundo, spokesperson of the Naval Forces Southern Luzon, said on Friday. The bodies were immediately buried.

Fish scare

Search and retrieval operations were launched on Friday after four more bodies were sighted floating at sea.

Vice President Noli de Castro visited Donsol on Thursday to partake of "cooido" (boiled fish) and steamed fish with town officials to prove that fish caught in the sea were safe to eat.

De Castro—first-based (safe) to ridicule—ate the fish served and affected by the fish scare.

Dennis B. del Socorro, regional director of the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources, said that fish caught in the area was safe to eat "as long as they are fresh and well-cleaned of entrails." —Agence France-Presse, Rey Garsolla and Pathfile W. Reyes (R, Inquirer Southern Luzon)

Sulpicio picks foreign firm to retrieve toxic cargo from Sulpicio ship

By Nina T. Chikamatsu, Cynthia D. Balana and Leila B. Salaverria

SULPICIO LINES INC. AR-rowed yesterday that Titan Salvage Corp. had been contracted to retrieve toxic chemicals inside the sunken MV Princess of the Stars.

Sulpicio Lines spokesperson Hermia Florido said the salvage plans would be released shortly, in close consultation with the Department of Transportation and Communications (DOTC).

Florido said the operation would take a maximum of 60 days from the signing of the contract. The mobilization of the equipment and personnel from abroad for the operation is being undertaken immediately, she said.

Titan, a marine salvage company based in the United Kingdom, Singapore and the United States, has done several projects in the Philippines, including the recovery in 2004 of Superferry 14 that was set ablaze by the Abu Sayyaf terrorists off Manila Bay.

UN-EU experts

A three-member team of experts from the United Nations and the European Union will visit Sibuyan Island in Romblon today to assess a potential environmental disaster from the highly toxic pesticide cargo and bunker fuel in the Princess of the Stars.

The team, which includes a marine chemist, arrived on Friday in Manila for a weeklong fact-finding mission upon the request of the Philippine government.

Concern centers on the cargo of endosulfan, carbofuran and cyclohexanone, all highly toxic chemicals stored in a container van in the ship's hull, plus the 30,000 liters of bunker fuel which could create a major ecological disaster.

Also, unknown quantities of other highly toxic pesticides—namely antimony, ramazon, nicotinamide and metamaron—have been exported to be among the cargo.

Potential disaster

"If not handled properly, this could be a disaster upon a disaster," said the UN team's Vladimir Sakhnine.

"Leakage of the ferry's toxic cargo would cause major ecological damage and directly have a terrible impact on the livelihood of people living in the region," he said.

DOTC Undersecretary Elena Bautista, head of Task Force Princess of the Stars, was scheduled to meet the UN experts yesterday.

Bautista said the UN team would determine if there was a need to dispatch a bigger group of specialists to Sibuyan Island, Romblon, to salvage the toxic endosulfan cargo.

"They will be there to make an assessment and join up with the team from Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources that has established a laboratory on site so that they can more regularly test the water samples," she said in a television interview.

Daily testing

Health Secretary Francisco Duque said the government was testing the water in the vicinity of the ship daily to encourage to prevent food poisoning and other problems from breaking out in Romblon province.

"The threat is still there. It's an ongoing threat, so we are monitoring through testing of the water every day. That is the agreement to the task force," Duque said.

The Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) yesterday said it was finishing three more ships to Sibuyan to reinforce the search efforts for dead ferry or to remove the toxic cargo on board.

PCG spokesperson Lt. Cmdr. Armand Balilo also appealed to those wanting to send relief goods to Sibuyan to deliver the goods to the PCG headquarters in Manila.

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Makati City

SUMMONS

Republic of the Philippines
Department of Health
CENTRAL OFFICE DRUG ADMINISTRATION COMPOUND
Invitation to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid

PCG: Skipper said he'd use another route

From page A1

PCG Manila station, testified that the ferry owned by Sulpicio Lines Inc. was ordered to sail from Manila on the night of June 20 after Capt. Florencio Martinon presented his plan to avoid Typhoon "Frank."

Relagna said that his personnel called him up to tell him about Martinon's shortcut route—going west of Tablas Strait, down to the west of Panay and Negros Oriental and then up to Cebu, his final destination.

The following day, on June 21, the Princess of the Stars, with more than 800 people aboard, capsized off Sibuyan Island, which is east of Tablas. Only 26 people survived the disaster. Around 300 bodies had been recovered. The others remain unaccounted for, including Martinon. Hundreds are believed trapped inside the ship's hull.

Relagna's testimony came when he was asked why the PCG did not stop the 23,000-ton ship from leaving despite the weather—typhoon No. 1 was up in Manila and Signal No. 2 along the ship's usual route to Cebu. Under existing regulations, vessels of the Philippine Coast Guard may not only prevented from sailing (Chapter No. 2 is located at its point of origin, route or destination.

R&R member Emerenio Sitoy asked if the alternative path was not covered by the danger zone question.

"No, sir. The danger zone is far from the path of the ship," Relagna replied.

Relagna also said Martinon never met especially to get the alternative route in their Master's Oath of Safe Departure, which is submitted to the PCG. He said that the contingency route was released to him verbally, and that he entered his boarding pass because its numbers bore the ship's call.

PCG urged postponement

In an interview with reporters, PCG boarding officer PO1 Milo Simbo, who inspected the Princess of the Stars, said he had recommended to Martinon to postpone the voyage because of the weather. Martinon reportedly replied that he had plotted an alternative safe route.

Simbo said he agreed with Martinon's alternative route even though it would prolong the voyage by about four hours. But he also said that he thought that the ship could have taken the regular maritime route and Martinon because only Signal No. 2 was up then.

Santos pointed out that a ship the size of the Princess of the Stars could easily withstand such a weather condition.

Constancio Bautista, Manila North Harbor port district manager, testified that his agency had given clearance for ships leaving port, saying this was a PCG responsibility.

Expanded probe rejected

Also yesterday, Senator Sen. Miriam Pimentel-Santiago rejected demands to expand the House inquiry into the Princess of the Stars tragedy to cover a 6-year-old contract for the 2nd 28 purchasing other vessels of Sulpicio Lines. The House inquiry resumes on July 17.

"I don't think we should dwell on the past. We should focus on the future and draft laws that would help avoid similar tragedies later on," said Pimentel-Santiago, chair of the transportation committee.

Pimentel-Santiago said he was more concerned about getting into the bottom of the latest sea tragedy, despite a news report, recently sourced from Greek Maritime Information Database, that Sulpicio Lines had been involved in 45—not just four—sea mishaps since 1986.

She said representatives of the shipping company would be placed first in the hot seat as the next hearing. Also to be questioned are officials of Det Norske Inc., the company which owned the toxic pesticide that sank with the passenger vessel, he said.

Pimentel-Santiago said he would also present a draft of a bill creating a Transport Safety Board, a "super body" that would oversee maritime operations in the country.

Pet project not new

Mandaluyong Rep. Rullan Rimon said Pimentel's pet proposal was not new, citing a 2007 measure proposing the creation of a Philippine Maritime Commission.

"This bill has never been heard by the committee even though it was referred to, which ironically, is the one conducting an inquiry into the Princess of the Stars tragedy," Rimon said during the committee hearing.

Answering to reports that Sulpicio Lines had been involved in 45 sea disasters in the past, Sen. Richard Gordon said reporters that nobody had been punished enough previously because investigators were not qualified.

"We have to tighten the admiralty courts; they should all be professionals, it should be fast, fair and swift. Justice should first be served before money," Gordon said.

Gordon, chair of the Philippine Red Cross that joined rescue and recovery efforts for the sunken ship, said that investigators "must not only have excellent seamanship, they must have no fear or favor in judging the situation; they must have political will and judicial will."

"Let us not be fooled that we have to take care first," the senator said, urging that results of the investigations should be assured. He stressed that Sulpicio Lines should not be exempt from paying for the damages caused by the sinking.

Safety system probe urged

Sen. Mar Roxas is pushing for a broader probe on the disaster to include not only the ferry's undeclared cargo of pesticide for Del Monte Philippines but also the status of the Global Maritime Distress Safety System (GMDSS) which was put into effect a decade ago to prevent maritime disasters.

"It is a regulatory relay mandated between the Department of Transportation and Communications (DOTC) and Thuraya CSP SCS. France pressed in 1998 for the purchase of a GMDSS but was yet materialized. We in the Senate will not let this grave sin of omission pass," Roxas said.

The GMDSS is a ship distress and safety communications system that requires all passenger and cargo ships over 300 tons on international voyages to be equipped with satellite and radio communications for sending and receiving distress alerts and for general communications.

A 2006 audit report showed that Thuraya abandoned the project in 2006 due to a billing dispute.

Miss Venezuela takes Miss Universe ...

From page A1

this year's event, a beaming Mendoza said she wasn't yet sure where her upcoming year of whirlwind appearances would take her. After a quick stop in New York, however, she wants to see her family again, enjoy some of her mom's home cooking and give everyone hugs.

"When I go back to Venezuela, I will jump on my family and they will jump on me," Mendoza said.

In the meantime, Mendoza said, she is simply looking forward to taking off her high-heeled shoes and massaging her feet.

She declined to discuss her kidnapping, which occurred a year and a half ago, but took advantage of the occasion to call for global peace.

"I want to raise my voice and tell the world that violence is not the answer," she said.

'Waiting to Win'

Mendoza, 22, is a 5-foot, 10-inch (178-centimeter), green-eyed beauty who enjoys long swimsuit and photography. She appeared as the seven contestants in the flowing yellow dress and dangling turquoise earrings that she wore during the evening gown competition in which Stewart took her spill.

Stewart, 26, is a motivational speaker and former trade and field star who is working on a book called "Waiting to Win." The Houston native plans to open a character development school for young children and has worked with students with autism in the Texas schools.

During a weekend interview with The Associated Press, Stewart said she felt very confident going into the show and couldn't imagine experiencing the same calamity as her predecessor.

"All I can offer to the world and to America is to do my best," Stewart said. "Success doesn't play a part in this."

The final five contestants included four from Latin America: Miss Mexico, Miss Jamaica, Brazil's Miss Colombia and Miss Venezuela. Rounding out the final five was Miss Russia.

Miss Colombia finished second behind Mendoza.

Miss Thailand won the prize for best national costume and Miss El Salvador was chosen by her peers as Miss Congeniality.

The NBC show, hosted by talk show star Jerry Springer and Spice Girl Melanie Brown, was broadcast live to hundreds of millions of viewers in 176 countries.

The unrushed Springer made a grand entrance on a motorbike—the rebirth of drama to Vietnam where the streets are teeming with millions of the speeding two-wheelers.

88 contestants

Eighty contestants gathered in the seaside city of Nha Trang, Vietnam, vying to succeed previous Miss Universe Riyo Mori of Japan.

Miss Universe was a big deal in Vietnam, the 23 semifinalists strutted across the stage during the swimsuit competition to the sounds of Lady Gaga, who belted out the pulsating "Bad Dance" in a platinum blond wig. Miss Vietnam, Lam Thuy Nguyen, was greeted with a roar from the Vietnamese audience.

The 10 finalists then competed in the evening gown event. They performed in front of a panel of judges that included international fashion experts and Donald Trump Jr., whose father, the real estate magnate and TV star, co-owns the pageant with NBC.

This year's contestants spanned a wide range of experiences and aspirations.

Miss Ethiopia was a professional basketball player. Miss Argentina says she has paranormal experiences. Miss Antigua & Barbuda is fascinated by snakes. Miss Angola was in a plane crash while trying to escape a conflict during her country's civil war.

Moro groups deny bomb plots

By Jeoffrey Maitem
Inquirer Mindanao

KIDAPAWAN CITY —Leaders of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) have denied reports they had joined forces to launch bomb attacks in parts of Mindanao today.

The alleged threat, circulated through text messages, said the two groups would carry out attacks in the provinces of Basilan, Sulu, Tawi-Tawi, Cotabato City, Lanao del Norte and Lanao del Sur, and Zamboanga City.

"There is no such plan, venture or effort from our organization. We are incensed of our forces on the ground. Those behind the information campaign are insane and they can sabotage the region's economy," said Eid Kabalu, MILF spokesperson, in a phone interview.

Kabalu said the MILF was busy helping remove tons of water like clogging the Rio Grande de Mindanao in Cotabato City.

"I think it's only part of efforts of certain groups to resume to derail the peace talks. They are making the situation more complicated," he said.

On his part, MNLF vice chair Nabtal Hasan described the report as baseless, saying the group had an alliance with the MILF but there was no plan to "terrorize the people."

"There is no problem in the leadership of the MNLF Chairman Nur Misuari. We are trying to reaffirm his full support for the peace agreement we signed with the government in 1996," Hasan said via the beeper in separate interview.

Hasan has admitted the MNLF had initiated talks with the MILF on a possible merger during a meeting in Kuala Lumpur in August 2007.

The meeting gave birth to an umbrella group of the two fronts, the Bangsamoro Islamic Liberation Movement.

Presidential Peace Adviser Hermogenes Esperon Jr. had said in Basilan on Friday that "in the coming peace talks, we are looking forward to the issues of purpose between the MNLF and MILF... meaning the two fronts agree to sit as one for the agreement."

Under the terms of the 1996 peace agreement, the MNLF ended his formal autonomy over a small portion of Mindanao, known as the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM). Withdrawal from Aide Al-public Inquirer Mindanao

Storm not likely to hit RP — Pagasa

A LOW PRESSURE AREA HOVERING off the southern tip of Luzon has intensified into a tropical depression but is unlikely to travel closer to Philippine soil, the weather bureau said yesterday.

Tropical depression "Helen," maintained 360 kms off Basco, Batanes, however, is expected to be heading in the area tomorrow and bringing rains and thunderstorms in the next two to three days, the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomic Administration Services (Pagasa) said.

As of 10 a.m. yesterday, the tropical depression had maximum sustained winds of 55 kph near the center and was moving slowly to the west.

It is expected to leave the Philippine area of responsibility and move toward Taiwan by Thursday.

The Pagasa weather bulletin warned residents of low-lying areas and mountain slopes in Luzon to beware of possible flashfloods and landslides. Jocelyn R. Uy

Rains force Teodoro Huey to land at Marikina school

WITH VISIBILITY down to almost zero due to the heavy rains spawned by tropical depression "Helen," a Philippine Air Force UH-1H helicopter carrying Defense Secretary Gilbert Teodoro and his party of five was forced to make an emergency landing at a Marikina City school at 1:45 p.m. yesterday.

There were no reported injuries, except for some frayed nerves, among the six passengers and four crew members of the Huey. Teodoro, who will tell reporters in Camp Aguinaldo by phone.

"It was a hunting experience. Parte OK. I am used to it, but there were some here who were nervous," said Teodoro, a former air force colonel, in jest.

In the time of the interview, Teodoro and the group were still at the Marikina Pagasa Memorial School in Barangay Malanday for the rains to stop.

Teodoro's said the Air Force pilots "executed their discretion and made a precautionary landing" as the heavy rains made it difficult for them to see and maneuver the chopper.

Teodoro's senior military assistant, Undersecretary Victor Perez, said: "We were approaching Manila from Tarlac when the rain became harder so there were reduced areas with zero visibility. The pilots were forced to look for a landing area. Among schools were hitting us."

He admitted that seeing the Huey inexperience around will structures and high rotation wires made the group nervous.

Teodoro had come from Tarlac where he gave a lecture at the Training and Doctrine Command of the Philippine Army. Nikko Dizon

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Siargao: Surfer's Paradise

by Aaron R. Victorio

My last photo gig had me traveling down to Siargao and I was stoked to see those legendary waves for the first time. And boy, I wasn't disappointed! The towering walls of water, great cards, and the cool mix of foreigners and locals just made for a fantastic scene.

Later on, while waiting for the after-event party to set up, I found myself fiddling with my gear on the beach. I just *had* to share the vibe of Siargao, one of the most beautiful places in the country, in real time. I tried out the laptop & cellphone setups using Globe mobile internet, not really expecting it to work, since we were basically in the middle of nowhere. But lo and behold, my front page popped up on the screen like I was in the middle of Makati. There I was, surfing the net in the middle of a surfer's paradise. Fantastic!

Since then I've used my Globe phone to upload pics covering a wake in Masbate and pretty much anywhere there's a Globe signal. We're talking about easy internet access with a phone in the wrangler, even remote places – which is where I usually end up, being a freelance photojournalist. Wherever my camera takes me, Globe is always there to keep me connected to work, friends and family.

Aaron R. Victorio is a travel and sport photojournalist whose portfolio includes work for the UNTC, Adidas, Nokia, i-D & V magazines and Mahindra, as well as game photography for the UAAP and the SEAGES games.

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OPINION

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Declogging the courts

EDITORIAL

LAST WEEK, THE MOBILE COURT PROGRAM WAS launched in Metro Manila, and one court resolved 20 cases in just one day. Hearings were conducted in a bus that had been converted into a courtroom.

Actually, the justice-on-wheels program is not new; it was launched four years ago. Four mobile courtrooms have been operating in the provinces as part of the effort to bring justice to many of the accused languishing in jails. With the alarming increase in prison population in Metro Manila, Chief Justice Reynato Puno decided to field one in the metropolis.

More mobile courtrooms should be deployed in Metro Manila and other cities to speed up the dispensation of justice. Judicial delays are disheartening litigants, and in some cases, they take justice into their hands just to get "speedy justice." But why allow accused to go to this extreme when there are lawful, peaceful solutions to the problem?

The justice-on-wheels program is one solution. Another is the barangay justice system. Called "the best thing that happened in the country's justice system," the barangay courts settled more than four million cases from 1998 to 2005. Chief State Prosecutor Jovencito Zuño said the conciliation systems prevented indiscriminate filing of cases in courts and resulted in government savings of more than P24 billion.

The long delay in the resolution of cases is due principally to the large number of vacancies in the judiciary, the laziness of some judges and the dilatory tactics of lawyers. As of 2006, pending court cases totaled 800,000. The regional trial courts had the biggest backlog of 353,026 cases. Other courts with big backlogs were the metropolitan trial courts, 305,134; municipal trial courts in cities, 88,280; and municipal trial courts, 51, 404.

The Philippines is notorious for the long delays in the resolution of important cases. Among the high-profile cases that took years to decide were: (1) the coco levy case in which the Supreme Court handed down its final decision 20 years after the Presidential Good Governance Commission instituted an action for the recovery/seizure of shares of the United Coconut Planters Bank, (2) the Marcos ill-gotten wealth case which the Court decided after 12 years, (3) one case against Salpicio Lim Jao, where the high tribunal ordered Salpicio to pay the heirs of a victim P1.3 million 10 years after the case had been filed, and (4) the Alcuaz-Ilusorio case in which the high tribunal affirmed the guardianship of the five accused after 12 years.

The deployment of the mobile courts and the barangay justice system will help ease the clogged court dockets, but in their current size now, it will be like fighting a raging forest fire with a garden hose. Something more drastic, more comprehensive has to be done. The court system has to be reinvented and expanded to cope with the worsening problem of clogged court dockets.

First, new courtrooms will have to be built and existing ones renovated. Some courtrooms are ramshackle affairs that do not inspire a reverence and respect for justice.

Second, more judges, prosecutors and public attorneys have to be appointed to handle the increasing number of cases.

Third, court annexation systems have to be developed, including a court administration management and information system and case flow management which should help reduce case backlogs.

Fourth, Congress should review the Speedy Trial Act and related Rules of Court that have proven ineffective in preventing judicial delays.

Fifth, the Supreme Court should urge the judges of the lower courts to use their contempt and subpoena powers to make lawyers adhere to the agreed periods for the resolution of court cases by denying motions for postponements, ensuring the appearance of witnesses and punishing unprofessional conduct and frivolous delaying tactics.

Sixth, rules should be laid down for the conduct of "marathon" or continuous trials to ensure the quick resolution of cases.

Pending cases totaled 800,000 in 2006. By now, the total must be pushing toward the million mark. This is simply unacceptable in a country whose laws and legal system proclaim that justice—speedy justice—shall be done to every man. The mobile courts and the barangay justice system have shown that speedy dispensation of justice is possible. More attention and more funding have to be given to the judiciary so that it can dispense quickly of its huge backlog of cases.

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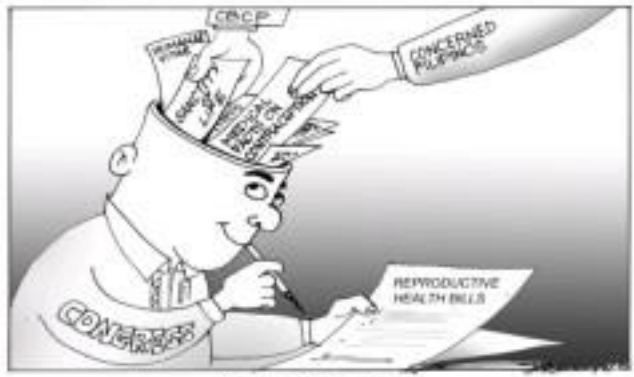

Yesterday's men

VIEWPOINT

Juan L. Mercado

OUR POLITICIANS' PENSET IN CRAVING crisis left us with 136 of them today—up from 68 in 1991. Will those "save kids on the block" become drivers of guards? Or will they remain frustrated leaders sporting little but low city ratings?

Many "Asian cities face[] in crisis," the Asian Development Bank says in its new book "Asia's Urban Challenge." More than 100 million impoverished people already cluster in city slums. More are flooding in. By 2000, over 2.7 billion people will be urbanites.

In comparison to Cebu shows growth rate to double the national levels. And Mumbai in India counts more people than Sweden and Denmark combined.

Metro Manila ranks as one of Asia's 11 megacities (populations over 10 million). By 2015, these 23 megacities, And half of these will be in this region. "In the future, the quality of life for most people will be determined by the misery of cities," National Geographic warns.

But "city institutions are failing." "Not one that is considered 'good' by quality jury, applied against books, etc., the ADB notes. Obsolete infrastructure, policy gaps and fiscal shortages can't cope with swirling change.

"Officials with little sense of urgency feel overwhelmed," the ADB adds. "Leaders of family, faith, civic cultures and nonprofit bodies that make a city successful are weakening. If this continues, the future will be bleak."

Nonetheless, the notorious culture syndrome drove Congress last year to elevate 38 towns, like Lanuza in Surigao and Siargao in Agusan del Sur, into the ranks of cities. How? Legislators simply narrowed residency for population, area and income demanded by city status. Then some legislators ordered those criteria into 38 more. President Macapagal-Arroyo "wished" at the least-getting by allowing the bills to lapse into law.

Disparities from judicial lawmaking are glaring. Barangay City in Eastern Samar, for example, has 10,677 registered voters. Metro Manila has 33 times that number: 1,318,488 voters.

Cebu is the Philippine model early and the most prominent of the thoughtful breed.

I won't go into the impact something like this can have on our image abroad. Though there's no altogether inconsequential, coming as it does on the heels of the news about multimillion-peso condominium units for Congress' most of condominium-sized sense. Let me hasten to add on that score that most people I've talked about believe the accusation, narrating Puja is a deceit. Fellow who is very probably the victim rather than the culprit here. But for all that, it can't help to offer our embassies hours now have hard-copies in books, or at least magazines.

But like I said, I won't get into that. My point here is simply this: Who would assume with Bagatsing's election. Admits want to devote them to rebuilding rather than helping others. In remembering crooked rather than honest, in a life of crime rather than a life of consistency? For clearly mounting a con job of this scale suggests unconscious acting abilities and powers of persuasion. Englebert may be known to be loud as dogs, but they are not known to be fools or totally pretty from their money.

Over, of course, can always say that some people are just born, or raised, that way. But moral predilections being to a life of wasted sense. But here's the part that raises this story from one of a filling interest to one of national interest: Bagatsing's case is doubtless extreme, but it is by no means unusual. Not for us anyway. For the unwilling thing is that we as a people like to do that routinely, if not with equally spectacular results. For some strange reason, we like to use our talents to swindle rather than help others, to wreck rather than rebuild, to do wrong rather than to do right. And for an even stranger reason, we call that "abilidad," or ability.

The Filipinos are inventive, ingenious and creative, artistry beats in our hearts. You see that in the ease with which we excel in music and the arts, swooning the world with breathgrass expressions of it. Any people that can tame the fawning Tagalog from a season of poverty to a language of pride—from clothes the early Americans fancied Filipinos to wear so they could not conceal weapons underneath to the national attire—have got to be wondrously creative. And lest we forget, we invented Edsa.

So we Filipinos are also sly, manipulative and devious. We are also among the most inventive, ingenious and resourceful people that you can meet. We are a country full of lawyers, and we are one of the most fearless countries in the world, our lawyers using the law to defend the law. Can you find any more destructive use of the law than the recent attempt to grab Mike de Venecia's cohorts the lot? Does there invoked the majesty of the law to crush the impeachment bids against a usurper?

We invented Edsa, yet the same Edsa became the very instrument for bringing back collaborator to rule. We claim to be the most democratic country in Asia, yet we are the kind of it to have shortened the national wealth or to allow the citizens to take part in their governance. Setting drivers gets traffic cops the most inventive excuses for violating traffic rules; cutting up cops for justice for the sake of justice—except for not making traffic flow. Inquirer Commando gives the most creative reasons for putting up campaign posters in Edsa. The Supreme Court offers the dissenter voice for not allowing Ramón Ang to duplicate his feat. Everywhere in the country we have laws of all shapes and sizes to help us not corners, get ahead of the line, bolsters for those who are left behind.

We all wear the face of the "Barefaced Cousins"—some more than others.

Barefaced

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

I HAVE WRITTEN OUR STORY LAST DECADE about the Filipino "Barefaced Cousins" who gained notoriety in London by swindling millions of pounds from ex-citizens. The title by the way comes from a play on words on the White movie, "The Barefoot Contessa." For those who like to have their movies to the last two or three decades, that movie, starring Humphrey Bogart and Ava Gardner, told the rags-to-riches story of an obscure cabaret dancer in Madrid who crashed Hollywood. That one movie tragedy: this one, to go by the cheeky title, "Barefaced Cousins," is a farce.

And one that despite its enormous potential can't possibly do as proud, other than in a previous way. The "Barefaced Cousins" is Elda Bergantiños, 63, who passed herself off as a rich heiress in the 1980s in order to convince investors that Mr. Babel's fly personality people, not least of them British nationals, to help her in that process, she managed to freeze them of a fortune that might have been an infinitesimal fraction of what she claimed was hers but to matter up to anything anyway. She raked in £2.3 million (P187 million).

What gave the story cinematic potential, quite apart from the "fun" of someone from the boondocks conquering Britain to the manner-born, was the fact that her victims were largely "unsophisticated" about her in court. They don't feel her as having "a terrific memory and a good knowledge on most subjects" as well as "easy to be with, made you feel she was something special, a great lady, strong personality, passionate."

All the same, suspicion was important, in making in court that she would have her dream: her act grew when her victims was finally dug up from various banks and hiding places, whichever was the more secure or harder to extract buried things from. The judge probably thought he was giving her the worst reasonable punishment on earth for her crimes, but his sentence merely reminded me of the story of the cards and monkey, particularly the part where monkey threw the turtle into the sea to drown it. The judge and Bergantiños based deportation back to the Philippines.

Which means that she could easily avoid the next generation of the thought-bounced.

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Kristie Kenney burst into tears at 3 a.m.

EARLIER THIS MONTH, THE WEEKLY WORLDWIDE was stunned by the daring rescue by Colombian military forces of prominent French-Colombian politician Ingrid Betancourt and 14 other hostages from the clutches of the Marxist Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), among the most bloodied, barbaric armies in the world, with US Ambassador to Manila Kristie Kenney, then the envoy's closest friend, now know that she is to be real life Mrs. William Brownfield, wife of the US ambassador to Colombia, whose "Team Bogota" played what the Washington Post, in a headline on Sunday, July 4, 2008, termed "a quiet role" in the Colombian rescue.

Prior to her Manila posting, Kenney was in Quito, Ecuador, while her husband was in neighboring Venezuela. Last Wednesday, at the morning coffee session at the Ambassador's residence of State for Educational and Cultural Affairs Gay Street, she narrated to me how her husband called her up from somewhere in Colombia at 3 a.m. Manila time last July 1, with a terse message: "We've got them." At that point, Kenney burst into tears and later thanked God that everyone was safe. Among the hostages rescued were three US Defense Department contractors whose single-engine plane was shot down over Colombia in 2003 while on a counter-narcotics mission.

* * *

The "quiet cable" mentioned by Post writer Jonathan Weisman actually underestimated the heroic role played by the envoy. A team of about 100 members of the US Special Forces had joined elite Colombian troops tracking the hostage group. Amid the chaos "it included the deployment of about 1,500 Colombian troops, whose rebel fighters wage a vast intelligence-gathering operation against the guerrillas, and training programs for Colombian troops and counterinsurgency specialists on how to interrogate and outwit rebels," Weisman reported. Brownfield said that the "unconventional plan" was Colombian through and through, hatched by an entry analyst. But the US group had been working with the Colombians on the hostages for more than three years on clandestine operations that "involved

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

every single element that came in pass that pulled off this operation, as well as the small bits and pieces that were left to operations." Part of US assistance involved intercepting FARC communications and revealing a "professional Special Forces culture" in Colombia's elite people study.

In every intelligence agent knows, the soul of such an operation is intelligence-gathering, and in this case it included keeping close tabs on the FARC's "internal strife." They noted how the rebels had become sloppy, returning to the same camps again and again.

* * *

The Post said the Bush administration relied on understanding with the Colombian government that any rescue operation affecting the American hostages would be preceded by negotiations. It appears that "an American rejection of the plan would have scuttled it." Earlier the US group abandoned the idea of a military raid, but when the Colombian plan was finished, Brownfield and a team of US American intelligence thought it could succeed. As Colombian planners made last-minute preparations last June 30, the ambassador briefed Vice President Dick Cheney, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and other Bush officials in a White Conference call. The plan relied on "tricking a rebel group commander by killing hostages into simply handing over 15 of their most prominent captives." It looked simple enough, but in reality it was quite complex and tricky. It involved gathering the highest echelons of FARC, the seven-man directorate and Supreme Allmar Cano. A team of Colombian commandos played the parts of rescuers and guerrilla leaders, and there was an elaborate scheme to intervene in the rebels' communications network.

* * *

The Post said Brownfield explained to Cheney and other officials that Colombian officials would ensure that a fake radio message purportedly from Cano would be sent to the guards, ordering them to prepare the hostages for pick-up by a rebel agency and then flown by helicopter to the rebels' high command. Brownfield recalled that members of the Bush Cabinet were "fascinated" and that he was "pressed fairly hard" to justify his recommendations. "At the end of the session, I think that Cheney thought that I had a clear-cut explanation as to how all of us down here—Team Bogota—had come up with this particular set of positions," he said. At the end of the videoconference, one of those listening from Washington told him, "Good luck. In fact, good luck to all of us."

* * *

The Post said that first halting the rebels in the jungles on 25 low-visibility hours the special forces in areas at a new airstrip two or three miles away. Once the evasion came so close to the American hostages bathing in the river, with their guards nearby, but before they would be reminded they disappeared. The Colombian troops "would then swoop down on them and their counterparts didn't always disclose their plans; in fact, it was only by detection that they realized that the Colombians were executing a rescue plan," setting later communication. Finally, Special Operations Joint Special Operations Command "Operation Check." The Post quoted the envoy as saying, "One more turn, in fact, was the FARC in Germany falling for this? Or never they in exercise their own plan?" Brownfield was never playing them?" In the tropic days before the operation, several of the Post, as Colombians and US officials rounded all possibilities, the US officials agreed that the risk to the American hostages would be too. However, they concluded that should the rebels discover the message deception, "they would simply disappear into the jungle with their trophy prisoners." The Americans also thought the Colombians were "well-prepared, ready to make it work." The envoy recalled, "We took a deep breath and said, 'Proceed.'"

Fetus in a fruit basket

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

SOMETIME LAST WEEK, THERE WAS A NEWS report that was so bizarre I remembered it among the blizzard of news items that assault us daily.

It was reported that a priest at the Quiapo church discovered a couple (minus bodies) with an aborted fetus inside it, tucked within a fruit basket used during the offertory procession. The report then added that the priest gave the basket to an usher during said ordered that the fetus be buried in a proper manner, and that the couple be admonished. Hmmm, after blessing the remains, I hope.

The first question that popped up in my mind was how someone could have passed a fetus inside the fruit basket without anybody noticing. Wasn't the basket inspected before it was given down the aisle? What had access to it before then?

Nearest who undergo abortion, whether spontaneous or induced, don't usually want to call attention to themselves or to the aborted foetuses. (As of 2008, there were 6,000 cases of abortion a day, according to abortion in this very punitive and hypocritical society.

Such an act can only be conceived and executed by people who have women in mind, but also those who have no qualms about using women as mere people and bring them over to their point of view. (I feel) some does not unnecessarily against an (induced) abortion. Half of all abortions are unwanted ones.

* * *

THIS may or may not have anything to do with it, but the story about the fetus in a fruit basket coincided with two observances: the 40th anniversary of the issuance of the Papal Encyclical "Humanae Vitae," in which Pope Paul VI laid down the Church's teaching on the use of contraception and World Population Day last July 11, with the theme "Family Planning: It's a Right, Let's Make it Real."

Yesterday this paper ran a banner story about Francis Archbishop Ruben Rosales's threat to refuse Communion to politicians and other individuals who publicly advocate abortion. These persons, he said, are "in a situation of sin," and anyone who would be late in a state of grace to receive Holy Communion. More than "pro-abortion" advocates should be denied the sacrament.

I have one question: In the good archbishop's book does a public declaration of a person's stance of sin or grace while administering Communion? A priest may know certain details of a communicant's life—he keeps a mistress on the side, etc.; or he took from government, or vice-versa speaks out in favor of abortion—but what if are being confessed matters and duly received absolution?

* * *

I ALSO have a problem with some pro-lifers' definition of abortion. Induced abortion is defined as "a procedure that removes a pregnancy before the baby is living or dead embryo or fetus." But judging from numerous personal letters and statements, the pro-life camp has also extended the term to cover the use of the pill, device or procedure that prevents conception, before the act of intercourse. All of these also should be aborted. Thus, they consider as "abortifacients," or causing abortion, conditions that prevent the "meeting" of sperm and sperm that could result in conception—then pregnancy, or even of contraceptive pills that prevent ovulation.

What about carefully tracking a woman's fertile period and avoiding sex on such days, just to avoid pregnancy? Is that not as deliberate and "unnatural" a means to manage fertility as other methods?

After this lofted tangent, a prime target of self-formerly choosing advocates seems to be the principal author in the House of the reproductive health and population bill, protests that the proposed prohibition on Contraception abortifacient apply to him and his like-minded colleagues. To begin with, he says, no one has proven the culpability of the bill opponents' abortion, then a reading of the proposed bill clearly states that abortion remains illegal and should not be used as a means of family planning. Arch. Bishop Deanda and other advocates of the ban, he says, "do not have the right to impose" it.

Clearly, then, the threat to withhold Communion from supporters of "abortion," which in conservative Church talk is code for anyone espousing reproductive health and rights, is a form of coercion. Is the archbishop saying that he will withhold the sacrament from Catholic politicians and local leaders who get great store by their reputations and social standing, but it also makes of the sacrament only a reward and promote the diocese' own social and political ends.

* * *

MUNDIT But background have seen a fetus in a fruit basket and a cleric's threat against "pro-abortion" politicians, but I have gained some of those years after the enforcement of a "contraception ban" in Manila, it has since been become an "epidemic" by family planning. Consulting with the World Population Day, a "Family Planning Fair" was held at the Quezon Memorial Circle. Volunteers and other volunteers counseling men and women on the various methods of family planning, and providing services and commodities for free. The fair also included an exhibit of instruments used in the fair, and the use of which fewer questioned women and legal advice on different aspects, prevention of which is one of the elements of reproductive health.

I can't help thinking that if the mother of the fetus in the fruit basket had only been able to avail of the fair, maybe her unwanted fetus would have been embraced with that piece of cotton—even

The lucky ones?

DR. GREGORY HOUSE, TALKING ABOUT HIS PATIENT, who runs an autistic child, said: "Why would you feel sorry for someone who gets to opt out of the basic, enormous frustrations which are utterly meaningless, inclusive and therefore degrading? This kid doesn't have to pretend as he tunes out to you? Such pain is very common in every gentleman's richly places. Can you imagine how liberating it would be to live a life free of all the mind-numbing social niceties? Aren't you this kid, I envy him."

This quote is very meaningful to me because: Firstly, I am tired of mind-numbing social niceties; and secondly, my youngest brother Nino, who is turning 30 in November, suffers from borderline autism.

YOUNG BLOOD

Amaerie Grace M. Cabanos

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are they? Thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twenty-something and below.—Ed.

His is a very mild form, so that some people think he suffers from Asperger's (when Hyperactivity Disorder. He cannot read and listen to without music and talks in an urgent and sometimes, to no one in particular, but he goes on as if he is actually conversing with someone. Unless you know the symptoms of autism, you would think Nino is just another "false" kid—until you notice that he has trouble keeping eye contact, he has problems keeping still, he asks questions out of the blue, his attention is subject to the smallest things, he gets frustrated, and he has fixations—with green socks, the number 9, and Mr. Bean, for example. Social norms and proper behavior are concepts he has difficulty understanding. He has trouble knowing right from wrong. There is no black and white for him. There is nuance in autism (or autistic behavior), but only realizes that he did something bad when he gets scolded or when we get mad.

This problem of his gets more complicated when we go out, because once he sees something he wants, he has to get it now or he would throw a fit—all of which happened too many times in different malls, shops and groceries. He would scream, kick and hit the floor, or run around and climb on top of his things, and scratch and punish the unfortunate person who tries to hold and restrain him. All attempts to explain or calm him don't work, and more often than not we have to physically carry him away from the object of his desire, barely out of the mall, and out cue in public.

While the mainstream of my family school principal, my mother first took Nino, who was then three years old, to his pediatrician, who then referred him to a developmental pediatrician. My brother underwent an evaluation consisting of an assessment of his intellectual level, behavior and learning and developmental. The pediatrician recommended that he see a speech pathologist and an occupational therapist to help him with communication and behavioral modification as well as help him cope with school. Eventually, Nino was referred to a school that is quite famous for how they deal not only with regular students but special children as well.

His speech therapy lasted for two years, but his behavioral modification therapies lasted for a little more than a year. The latter was interrupted for a year because another assessment done when he was eight years old showed definite improvement. At home, he was becoming fewer tantrums and frustration fits. He established more eye contact and was more articulate. And he started to grasp the difference between right and wrong. By the time he was nine, he was able to keep up with the academic requirements, although his social and grade teacher noticed his attention span growing shorter as the school year was about to end.

Another visit to the developmental pediatrician ended with the recommendation that Nino see his occupational therapist three times a week for the next school year. Since both my parents were working full time, I was tasked to accompany him to his therapist on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays.

Living 24/7 with an autistic brother is already a trial of some kind, but being in a place where many of them are assembled and feeling comfortable was a completely different experience.

There kids do not fit in well in the normal world, but come to think of it, where else is it really? What good is a world of exclusive and normalcy, a world of extremes, like what we all have to deal with all the time? What do they miss, the ability to be quiet or very loud enough? To not always try to get to the right? To worry about worldly things and do anything to achieve them?

There's one funny thing I've heard said about autistic children. You should be glad when they learn to lie because that means they have learned to think the way normal people do. I think this captures the irony of how it has become "normal" for people to see their intelligence to get ahead of the pack through deceit and immorality, wearing masks and pretending to be more than what they are.

One of the things I have realized from Nino's condition is how easily we lose our innocence or taint it as we grow old. It seems just a child's state of mental blindness that needs to be lifted. So, allow me to indulge in God-like bliss of constant amusement and curiosity, of never holding grudges and learning to wear blues to give the right answers to life's most important questions.

In Nino's case, I envy the curiosity that drives from his beautiful brown eyes and the ready smile plastered on his face. Always, I envy the ability to be happy for no one or where to go or how to make someone like us, or never, how to be like someone else. It's all these things—or rather, the absence of them—beautifully woven and protected by innocence that sometimes make me think that perhaps we are the ones who are missing out on what it means to be alive—and that Nino and others like him are the lucky ones.

Amaerie Grace M. Cabanos, 22, is a freshman at the San Beda College of Law.

NOTICE TO YOUNGBLOOD CONTRIBUTORS:

Send your contributions by e-mail to youngblood@inquirer.com.ph together with your address, age and the school, course and year you're enrolled in or, if employed, the position you're holding and the company you work with. Limit it to 600 to 800 words. Articles that have been previously published

Are you a Catholic writer?

NEWSSTAND

John Nery

SOME READERS HAD A READY QUESTION after last week's brief last week's criticism of the 58th newsweek's "pivot to be Kapuso" tagline. What about "Team Kapuso!" or "Go, Kapuso!"?

I haven't seen reports of ABS-CBN's new in-house slogan, but I think I get the drift. They illustrate the difference between identification and promotion. Journalists who identify themselves as "Kapamilya" or as linked to "Kapuso" are doing the necessary thing, claiming responsibility for their journalism. Those who constantly remember each other's support or severance as "proud to be Kapuso" or "ILABS.ON" falls down the same faded as being "in the service of the religion" are doing precisely wrong.

In the Philippines, the majority of journalists must be identified as the work of someone or some group. That is the news media's minimum requirement. Why? Of the many publications available in the country, it is only The Economist which authors its articles—although, to be sure, it does have bad-to-poor-fair recognition to the authors of its famous special reports, which this magazine, which calls itself a newspaper, calls "surveys." Newspaper editorials, of course, are editorials and, because they are unsigned, represent the view, not of one person, but of the institution.)

Journalists must identify themselves; it's common sky. There is no normality, however, for journalists to turn every story they file, every report they produce, every comment they present, into a marketing opportunity.

If a newspaper were to change its byline policy and turn identification into promotion, the results would be public. Imagine a story about a political scandal, or a story on new kidnapping, bylined "Proud to be Kapuso" or "Kapamilya." Or, the other way: Its Article is Unit, Proud to write for the No. 1 newspaper.

The promotional tagline brings an interesting, and down a slippery slope, but on the edge of a cliff about. It's a matter of style, and my editor friend who speaks excellent English, by the way, a reporter if you buy his language prowess on AM radio) from signing off with the gesture of the mouth: "Mike Enriquez pa. Proud to be No. 1 AM by station again."

Startling, except dick-online.

* * *

A reader much smarter than I am (he has two degrees in physics) responded to a column I wrote last May with a thoughtful meditation on the growing intolerance that seems to be the result of a culture of opinion.

"This is the climate nowadays; people, especially the young, are losing the confidence to trust in their own capacity to know the truth, and no wonder, most of them are falling into a state of relativism," he said.

I do not know about the meaninglessness part, exist in a meaning makes and often we make meaning out of the most unpromising material, to the most inhospitable conditions. But it is possible that he defined the situation correctly about the loss of trust in our capacity to know the truth.

A true but postmodern, however, that set me thinking. He said, "If you don't mind, are you, we might say, a 'Catholic' thinker?"

He wrote his letter on May 20. I have been mulling his question ever since. (I'm a slow study.)

* * *

In the thinking part, the answer is emphatic and definite: No, never mind, a Catholic thinker is a contradiction in terms. Of course, I'm a Catholic, but I'm not a thinker. The inspiration of Popes or Thomas of Aquinas. Or, much closer to our time, paradigm shifters like Jaime Cardinal Sin or Joseph Cardinal Sin. Gaudium et Spes Gaudium et Spes is much to spread. Or, even closer to our simple souls, happy polemicists like G. K. Chesterton and Hilaire Belloc. These are the ones who do the thinking.

Worse, the presumption in this column's title, from Weisler" to "writer." I am just a journalist.

But I do not consider writing as a tradition, one that goes spread attention to the social teachings of the Church. As I have said before, I am a child of Vatican II.

Now, if we understand the last years of the John Paul II era and the first years of the Benedict XVI papacy as the closing of the windows opened during John XXIII's great aggiornamento, then I'm in trouble.

Ecumenism issues, I think the Church hierarchy in the Philippines has gotten it wrong. There is nothing unconvertible, for instance, in the crisis of legitimacy that surrounds the Presidency, the 4 pm of Malacañang's Palace. Nor in the Church's own failures growth and the essential responsibility of Catholic couples continues to be based, mistakenly on what the great theologian Bernard Haring characterized, with deliberate irony, as the absolute to-be-avoided.

But on other issues, I think the bishops called it right. On the conflict tearing the Couples for Christ movement apart, for instance, the hierarchy has sought to honor the original charism of the movement. That is right as it is right to be on the right outside the Jesuits, on the other hand, have been very much on the side of Tony Meloto and his social apostolate. Sometimes the alignment is explicit, as in an op-ed piece written by Bishop Emeritus Francisco Claver, SJ, and published in the Inquirer in the same week Fr Bautista's brother Nino Alberto signaled support for Fidel Ramos in 1992. They literally stood on the same side of the stage. Bishop and Fr. Bienvenido Nebres, famous de Manila's president, were keynote speakers at the Ateneo de Manila graduation ceremonies in Chicago. They shared the same stage.

* * *

But leaving 12 months' worth of columns, I am struck by the number of church-related issues that I have written about. Too many, perhaps. That must be because I believe both the Church and Catholic culture to be intimately political. A Catholic writer? Would that it were true.

* * *

Email jnery@inquirer.com.ph

THEY SAID

Keeping quiet

"Why did Barbara Vice President Teodoro Gutierrez] not order the person arrested? He is responsible for that [disturbance]. Here is a person who wants to assassinate the President and he just let him go."

—Senator Panfilo Lacson, finally voicing out what others are appreciated by a man who wanted a successor President Benigno Aquino.

Coast Guard needs more 'sophisticated' ships

LETTERS

DEBT TIRE ACCIDENTS RAPPED BY the high seas, the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) seems to waddle ready to hands of any responsibility. Yet it has the authority and power to implement the rules and regulations pertaining to the safety of ships and passengers.

Sulpicio Lines' 8th Process of the Dines out and despite a typhoon bulletin to cease in route and destination, had the PCG-insisted on the necessary precautions, it could have prevented the tragedy.

The captain of the ship should also be limited for failing to correctly assess the risks posed by the typhoon. And the captain and his common sense, the ship would have sensitively ignored Fendi's path.

The Senate blue ribbon committee should conduct an independent investigation of the tragedy that caused the death of hundreds of passengers. No stone should be left unturned. But should not reduce the accidents to insignificance just because Sulpicio Lines is paying the victims' families P200,000 each, which is not enough. Whoever are responsible for this tragedy should be punished.

It should be noted that guidelines on the safety of ships and their passengers are not being strictly implemented by the PCG even during bad weather conditions. The PCG is obviously **unmindful and oblivious** of its duties and responsibilities.

Besides, the PCG doesn't have sophisticated gadgets for search and rescue operations and defense. Our lawmakers should allocate a bigger budget for the poor boats of such bases. The poor boat is justified because as an archipelagic country we have lengthy shorelines and because of the intervention of other countries into our waters. The budget could be taken from the pork barrel of senators and congressmen. Pls.send it/guns and battleships, too.

The ships are there and the PCG have today are obsolete and scary.

—DIOSDADO S. MACALAGAY
Bongao, Tawi-Tawi

Kudos to PDI, with some reservations

CONGRATULATIONS TO YOUR MANILA Bindle Junior Inquirer. Gals you recently launched for our youth—our future leaders. The Inquirer has again led the way in the drive to win the future for this country. We have our youth as our hope for change and a better Philippines. Keep up the good work.

The Inquirer certainly leads all newspapers in its advocacy for good governance and responsible citizenry and ethical practices. Congratulations! I do have some concerns, such as the "negative earnings" of Gonzalo de Quiroz who can't seem to see anything good in President Macapagal-Arroyo's activities, did the name of Ramon Tulfo. Now I would like to see some balance in their columns. Nobody is all evil. There is always something good in a person.

It is also sad that our bishops and cardinals are also advocates of hatred instead of the "love of God" that the Church is preaching. What have they done for the poor and suffering? It's easy to criticize. Let our words match our works and lifestyle.

—MARVIN

Thought-provoking new section

I WOULD LIKE TO CONGRATULATE THE Inquirer on its new regular section Learning. The article "How can we teach values in a corrupt society?" (Inquirer, 5/11/08) was very thought-provoking and provided a positive approach on the solutions of the problems by beginning with the individual and the family.

I look forward to more articles of this kind and the column of Quezon Law Class, an expert in her field.

—SANDRA B. SOLARIO,
133 Lupon Hind St.,
Mandaluyong City

METRO Citizen's Call

If you have any complaints, grievances or suggestions about the operations of news and photos by the Inquirer, you may write to the Publisher, Philippine Daily Inquirer, Elisa Roces Avenue, corner Rizal and Marcelo Streets, City of Makati or send a fax to Nos. 897-4793, 897-4794, or e-mail opinion@inquirer.com.ph.

Writers of letters to the editor are requested to include their complete address and telephone or pager number or e-mail address for verification purposes. The Inquirer will not publish any letter unless such information is supplied.

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CEBU PACIFIC AIR.COM

Angry protesters raid …

Front page A1

the rides, making frantic whipcrack on their radios for reinforcement.

As one rioter, the guards tried to block the demonstrators but…grossly outnumbered, they eventually gave way to the unruly crowd, which burned a human barricade around the building.

The lightning power started at 8 a.m. and ended a few minutes later. Bayan public information officer Arnold Padilla said.

Public anger

Padilla said his group understood that, one of the three major corporations in the country, to feel the public anger toward the continuing oil price increases, which he said averaged almost P2 per liter every week.

"This protest should send a strong message to the oil companies and the government that the people's patience is running thin and that we could no longer tolerate any further explorations," he said.

Since January, pump prices of diesel have increased by 56.72 percent per liter and those of gasoline by 43.49 percent.

The protesters demanded the cancellation of the 12 percent value-added tax (VAT) on petroleum products "to immediately bring down oil prices by as much as P7 per liter."

No VAT suspension

The protesters also sought "effective control of prices from further increases" by repealing the oil deregulation law.

A SECURITY guard stands beside a wall filled with protest graffiti at the Pilipinas Shell building in Mount City on Monday. Protesters, angered by the series of increases in oil prices, earlier held a "lightning rally" to denounce the oil companies. EDGAR SU

President Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday made it clear that she would not give up the VAT on oil, saying that the tax and other fiscal reforms had helped her administration shield the nation from the worst effects of the food and fuel crisis worldwide.

Speaking to a delegation of diplomats and tourism directors based in the United States and Canada, the President said her administration would continue to implement "the reforms that has worked" and to further "earn dollars to buy petroleum and food."

She said her administration would save funds on promoting more medium and business process outsourcing (BPO) investments in the country.

Padilla and members of Bayan, Anakbayan, Migrante, Kilusang Mayo Uno and other militant groups converged at two service centers a block from the Shell building before marching their surprise appearances.

Last week, another group of activists from Anakbayan picketed the nearby offices of Petron Corp. on Gil Puyat Avenue.

Padilla said the three major oil companies should expect similar types of mass demonstrations in the next few days.

Signature drive

Asked why they decided to use violence to express their grievances, Padilla said it was because they knew removing the gates would be a roundabout task.

"We want to irritate them," he said.

In Legaspi City, civil society groups have collected some 500 signatures a week since they launched a signature campaign calling for the scrapping of the oil deregulation law and the VAT on petroleum products.

Militant groups in Legaspi City have also started to hold weekly noise barrages to decry the almost weekly increases in oil prices.

The petition has been making the rounds in jeepney and tricycle stations for the past week, and has started to make rounds in the city market as of Monday, Bayan-Bikol spokesperson Tessa Lopez said.

Similar signature campaigns are being conducted in other provinces in the Bicol region.

Lopez said that by this week, her group hoped to forward the petition to local congressional representatives and to local government officials who may support the cause.

Caravan

In Los Baños, Laguna, Anakbayan-Southern Luzon said it would continue its protest against oil price increases, which started Thursday last week, until the Fiesta Ibong Adarna of the Mariwasa Adventure.

Anakbayan members with the Southern Tagalog Cultural Network and other youth organizations, is holding mural and collage-making workshops, street skits, discussions and mass heritage during the campaign. With reports from Christine O. Avendaño in Manila; Jaymee T. Gamil and Marlowe Cleon, Inquirer Southern Luminz

Gov't task force formed to go after oil deregulation violators

By Maegan C. Ortiz

THE TASK FORCE ON OIL deregulation now has more power to run after unscrupulous traders preying on the public.

The Department of Energy (DOE) and the Department of Justice (DOJ) yesterday signed a memorandum which contained amended provisions of an earlier agreement, giving more teeth to the task force amid the oil crisis.

The closer relationship between the DOE and the DOJ, through the amended memorandum of agreement, will enable violators of the Oil Deregulation Law of 1998," Energy Secretary Angelo Reyes said at a press briefing at the DOJ yesterday.

Reyes said the DOE-DOJ Task Force, created on March 12, 1998, did not have the authority to issue subpoenas or violators or order the submission of pertinent documents.

"Now, the Task Force will be assisted by new state prosecutors who can issue subpoenas and conduct preliminary investigations," Reyes said.

According to the amended memorandum of agreement, there is a need for the Task Force to take a very active role in ensuring and evaluating all factors to ensure the fair and reasonable pricing of petroleum products as mandated under Republic Act No. 8479 or the Oil Deregulation Law.

"Whereas, there is a need to increase the membership of the DOE anti-to enhance the greater participation in the deliberations of issues and implementation of programs of action adopted by the DOE-DOJ Task Force in connection with reports on unreasonable prices of petroleum products; commission of prohibited acts under Section 11 of R.A. No. 8479, namely cartelization and predatory pricing; and other prohibited acts under Section 12 of the Act," the memorandum said.

The Task Force would also investigate on its own or upon the request of any person, any threatened, imminent or actual cartelization or predatory pricing; the commission of any violation under Section 12 of the act or any unreasonable rise in the price of a petroleum product; and in the proper cases, direct the provincial or city prosecutor concerned to file the appropriate criminal complaint.

It would also request the proper court to issue a restraining order or injunction pending the hearing of a criminal complaint for cartelization, predatory pricing or for violations of Section 12 of the law. With a report from Abigail L. Ki

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT
Regional Capital (Region)
[illegible] Mr./Ms. Manuel M. Manalo, Manager

NOTICE OF FILING OF APPLICATION/S FOR ALIEN EMPLOYMENT PERMIT/S (AEP/S)

Notice is hereby given that the following corporations/employers have filed with this Regional Office applications for Alien Employment Permits:

Name and address of Company/Employer	Name of Position/Nature of Employment	Position
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

If you have any information/objection to the above-mentioned application please communicate with the Regional Director.

KATHERINE L. MANALO
OIC, Regional Director

PIR - July 15, 2008

Human rights chief chides PNP

Front page A1

when she spoke during flag-raising ceremonies on the occasion of the first year service of the PNP Human Rights Affairs Office (HRAO).

She devoted a part of her speech to programs launched by the PNP to polish up its reputation and to efforts by the HRAO to help the organization meet the United Nations human rights standards for law enforcement agencies.

Lina also condemned various cases of human rights violations allegedly committed by PNP members.

"Memories of the abuses committed during the martial law years, when the police were part of the Philippine Constabulary, are hard to forget. Incidents during the term of past police chiefs, like the Recuenco-Rabusta case and the Dacera ordeal, have not been forgotten," De Lima said.

Black marks

She said the PNP's image was also recently tainted by the alleged robbery in Tanauan, Batangas, in May of three men supposedly involved in the bloody robbery of an RCBC branch in Calapan earlier that month.

Eleven members of the Batalang Bato robbery gang were killed in May 2005 in what policemen under the then chief of the Presidential Anti-Crime Commission Task Force Hidalgo, Sen. Panfilo Lacson, claimed was a "legitimate encounter."

Families of the victims cried "robbery."

In May this year, human rights lawyers urged the Supreme Court to resolve the dismissal of the cases against the police officers linked to those killings, saying new witnesses, including the cop-gunmen themselves, had expressed willingness to testify.

In the Dacera incident, three men were killed on Nov. 7, 2005, in an alleged shootout with police Traffic Management Group (TMG) agents inside the Dacera Center in Pasig City. TMG officials claimed the three were suspected car thieves and terror department officials denied it was a robbery.

No letup

De Lima said the CHR would not relent on its watchdog role.

"We as long as necessary, we will continue to issue those statements on violations specific to law enforcement agents, such as illegal arrests, arbitrary detentions, excessive use of force, [the] unexplained killings and even the indiscriminate parading of suspects to the media, a practice which, I must note with much disgust, has not stopped," De Lima said in her speech.

She said the CHR would continue its investigations into cases of human rights violations and file the appropriate cases against any officers involved.

"They (PNP) are still leading [the list of human rights violations] based on statistics until late 2007," De Lima told reporters after her speech.

The PNP along with the Armed Forces of the Philippines, has been tagged by both local and international agencies as major human rights abusers.

In 1999, statistics from the CHR showed the PNP was the top human rights violators in the country.

The US state department, in its 1999 country report, also noted that Philippine security forces were responsible for extrajudicial killings, torture, disappearances and arbitrary arrests.

When Avelino Razon was installed PNP director general last year, he said he was confident that the PNP would shed its image as a human rights transgressor.

'We are partners'

Asked about De Lima's remarks, Razon said the CHR was helping the PNP address the problem.

"They are our our enemy but our partner in human rights. The President herself said that human rights should be the legacy I should leave behind here in the PNP," Razon said.

Retired United Region Police Office chief Director Geary Barias said reporters the PNP's reputation at No. 1 human rights violators "is to be expected."

"When you implement the law, there will be those who are hurt when they are at the receiving end when you impose the law," Barias said.

He pointed out that when complaints were filed against policemen, these were immediately counted as human rights cases.

"But these are not outright human rights violations. They are meant to harass our law enforcers," he said.

Anyway, Barias said the PNP must implementing measures to integrate the human rights concept in the training of police recruits.

"We have a series of seminars as part of the reorientation where we present this into the curricula." With a report from Inquirer Research

Republic of the Philippines
DepED DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Caraga Administrative Region
Butuan City

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Department of Education, Caraga Administrative Region (Regional Office) through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC) invites prospective bidders to apply for eligibility and if found eligible, to bid for:

NAME OF PROJECT — Supply and Delivery of Instructional Materials (Mid-Year-ender)
NATURE OF FUNDING — Maintenance and Other Operating Expenses (MOOE)
APPROVED BUDGET — THREE MILLION THREE HUNDRED THOUSAND PESOS (P3,300,000.00)
CONTRACT DURATION — One Hundred Twenty (120) Calendar Days
DELIVERY SITES — "Down to Area" delivery to various recipient schools
PARTICULARS

TITLE	QUANTITY
Early Learning English (Grade 3) (Activity Book)	5,000
The Schedule of BAC activities is as follows:	

BAC Activities	DATE and TIME	VENUE
Availability of bidding documents	July 15-16, 2008	DepED Caraga Regional Office, Rizaldo Avenue, Butuan City
Pre-bid Conference	July 25, 2008 at 2:00 p.m.	DepED Caraga Regional Office, Rizaldo Avenue, Butuan City
Deadline for submission of bids	August 15, 2008 at 10 AM	DepED Caraga Regional Office, Rizaldo Avenue, Butuan City
Opening of Bids	August 15, 2008 at 11:00 p.m.	DepED Caraga Regional Office, Rizaldo Avenue, Butuan City

*The Bidding Documents shall be available at the BAC Secretariat Office, DepED Regional Office on July 15-16, 2008 upon payment of non-refundable amount of TWO THOUSAND FIVE HUNDRED PESOS (P2,500.00) to the Cashier.

Bidding shall be conducted in accordance with procedures under the Implementing Rules and Regulations of R.A. 9184 otherwise known as the Government Procurement Reform Act. Information is also available on the PhilGEPS.

The Department of Education, Caraga Regional Office reserves the right to accept or reject any bid, to annul the bidding process and reject all bids at any time prior to contract award without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder or bidders.

(Sgd.) ISABELITA M. BORRES
Director III
Chairman, BAC

Across the NATION

Another worker dies at Hanjin shipyard

NEWSBRIEFS

■ ILOILO CITY

Typhoid-hit areas get water ration

RESIDENTS of typhoid-prone barangays in this city are receiving distilled water to avert a possible outbreak of the disease.

The City Health Office is validating a reported case in Barangay Concepcion.

City Proper ABC president Roberto Divinagracia said distilled water is being supplied in eight villages of the water front area.

David Israel Dizo
Inquirer Visayas

■ COTABATO CITY

2 found dead in S. Kabuntalan

Two more were found dead this time in Barangay Kiling in Sharif Kabunsuan town in Sharif Kabunsuan yesterday.

Senior Insp. Clarito Barroso, police chief of Datu Odin Sinsuat town, said the victims were bullet wounded in the body and head and were dumped at Kilometer 12 in Barangay Awang, about 5 km away from the Army's 6th Infantry Division headquarters.

"They were believed to be Pat-tani or Ilaga," Barroso said.

No identification cards were recovered from the victims as both were naked when found by commuters.

Edwin O. Fernandez
Inquirer Mindanao

■ MISAMIS OCCIDENTAL

Silay police chief relieved

THE POLICE chief of Silay City in Negros Occidental was relieved from his post on Thursday after Silay City Mayor Jose Marie Montilla completed disciplinary proceedings against him.

Montilla said he implemented the day after Montilla has claimed that four persons allegedly attempted to set him Tuesday evening.

Talip na Occidental police director Senior Supt. Rolando Nana is expected to meet Montilla and Councilors Renato Abella, Jovic Lacuata, Clodualdo Lacuata, Sonny Porteros, Bandonicio Espano, Jr., Gilbert Tagalog, Benny Villas and Samuel Cuadio.

Vice Mayor Jovie Tio and 24 barangay chairmen from the town's 34 villages signed the seven-page petition before regional elections officer Lemuel Tangkay.

Jay A. Cabres
Inquirer Visayas

■ CITY OF SAN FERNANDO

Cop slain in gun battle

A POLICEMAN was wounded during a three-hour running gun battle with four suspected robbers who laylor Candelas, Pampanga, a few hours after they ambushed and killed another policeman in San Rafael, Bulacan, also on Monday.

Bulacan police chief Senior Supt. Aldo Santiago said Senior Insp. Rodolfo Magsino and Inspector in the Brgy. of Senior Insp. Magsino, Francisco as the suspects fired back when pursued in Barangay Talaring, Candelas, at about 10a.m.

The suspects killed SPO1 Gerson Bituin in San Rafael at 7:30 a.m., Bulacan said.

Jennifer Orijan
Inquirer Central Luzon

TROUBLED BRIDGE
People walk through a makeshift bridge made of bamboo below the Tiguan Bridge in Tuboran, Catarman, Iloilo. The bridge was destroyed by the flash flood two weeks ago caused by Typhoon "Frank."

By Robert Gonzaga
Inquirer Central Luzon

SUBIC BAY FREEport—Another worker died on Sunday when an eight-ton steel beam slipped and hit him at the shipyard of the Korean firm Hanjin Heavy Industries and Construction (HHIC) Philippines Inc. here.

Bede Iniendo, 31, who worked for a Hanjin subcontractor, Bobic Hanmong Inc., was reportedly installing a hatch girder on Saturday when the eight-ton section of the eight-foot long steel beam slipped and hit him on the back and left side of the body. The hatch girder was used as a beam for parallel connection.

The accident happened at 4:40 p.m. on Saturday at the shipyard's Assembly Shop C.

Iniendo was taken to the Justice L. Cuadras Memorial Hospital in Olongapo City, where he died at about 7:30 a.m. Sunday. He was the 12th worker to have died in the nearly-completed yard since the shipyard since the project started in 2006.

As a result of this latest accident, the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority on Monday issued a second cease-and-desist order (CDO) against HHIC.

Chairman Roberto Garcia said they will not resume work until the Assembly Shop C and not the other operations. It would only be in effect for seven days.

Legal measures

In a statement, the SBMA said it would "suspend further legal and regulatory measures (there) Hanjin fail to comply with health and safety requirements."

The SBMA also said it expected a "full account of the accident from investigators as to (ifitems) public health and safety rules) and to less substantive departments to determine whether premium actions against any erring entity would be warranted."

Last month, the SBMA issued a CDO against the operations of HHIC's construction site after a worker died from an accident at the shipyard. The CDO was effective for seven days only.

In April, a workplace safety and health assessment conducted by the Department of Labor and Employment at the Hanjin facility revealed that accidents in the shipyard could be attributed to the firm's health and safety lapses.

The DOLE report said "(were 4,300 accidents occurred in HHIC" and that "most of the accidents were due to falls, burns and puncture which resulted to fractures, loss of body parts, lacerated wounds, dislocations and body sprains."

But in 2007 to 2008, although SBMA records showed a steep drop in the number of accidents, from 3,273 in 2006 to 1,120 in that period, nine deaths were recorded.

The DOLE report, however, said the figures "have to be regarded with great circumspection."

Fil-Ams eye scenic Antique town for tourism dev't

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
Inquirer Visayas

ILOILO CITY—A GROUP OF Filipino-American investors will put up a P500-million tourism project in Anini-y town in Antique, a move that could put the province in the country's tourism map.

The investors belonging to the Chicago Filipino Chamber of Commerce will develop the Hamea Homes peninsula in Barangay Sta. Fe in Anini-y into a world-class tourism destination, said Antique Governor Exequiel Javier Jr.

Plans said that about 20 investors headed by Dr. Edmundo Rebacia would visit the site again this week in preparation for the start of the project.

The provincial government and the investors signed an agreement last May to develop the area.

Hamea-Fuentes offers a scenic and pristine beach overlooking the magnificent peaks of Cerro de Gallo. The peninsula is near the famous Sta. Fe hot springs.

Anini-y, the southernmost town of Antique, is a 5th class municipality and has a population of around 22,000.

"This is a big boost to the province and will bring livelihood and development to our people," Perez told the lawyers.

The governor said they would provide education and assistance to around 40 families whose properties have been acquired by the investors.

Perez said that because of the project, President Macapagal-Arroyo has assured the backtracking of the rehabilitation of the Tibiao-Bantic coastal road. The road was the main route from Iloilo to Antique until a shorter road existing across San Joaquin town in Iloilo and Hamtic in Antique was opened.

Perez said the original route will be reconstructed because the present national road is vulnerable to landslides.

Antique also launched last month hydro power plant projects in the towns of Bugasong, Tibiao and Laua-an. The 14-megawatt plants are expected to make the province self-sufficient in its power supply needs. The hydro power plants will be the first in Western Visayas.

NFA pulls out cheap rice from E. Visayas markets

By Vicente S. Labro
Inquirer Visayas

TACLOBAN CITY—THE National Food Authority will start pulling out this week its rice from major public markets in Eastern Visayas as these could be sold in depressed communities to ensure that the poor could avail themselves of cheap rice.

Benjamin Illanes, NFA regional director, said NFA rice sold at P18.25 per kilo should be sold only to holders of family access cards in community-based outlets such as the Tindahan Natin, Bigasan sa Barangay and barangay kasiri outlets (BKO) that are operated by local governments, and even by nongovernmental groups.

By July 14, there's at most P18.25 (NFA rice) in the major markets in Eastern Visayas! ... [and] by the end of July there should already be the implementation of the family access cards," Illanes said.

Family access cards are issued by the Department of Social Welfare and Development to the poorest families in the region and presented when buying rice from NFA-accredited outlets.

Illanes said they were relocating on the sale of the "pure poor" P18.25-per-kilo NFA rice in the communities because the cards operations were familiar with the buyers and knew if they were really poor who needed to buy low-priced rice.

He said the outlets for the cheap rice were exclusively except those run by LGUs, which could either be exclusively or mobile.

Morris, however, said they were recommending selling rices because there could reach one to one to villages.

But he quickly added that the selling rices must prioritize the barangays in be visited, starting with the most depressed.

"They should never go to barangays that are not depressed, and they are not allowed even to sell to the rices proper because there are already outlets there," he stressed.

Illanes said he suspected that the long queues at NFA rice outlets in public markets were caused, among others, by unscrupulous people who bought rice so they could later resell these in their barangays or in the interior communities.

But he added that among those in the long queues were people in the middle-income group who could not afford commercial rice.

A PERSON with disability buys NFA rice in Davao City.

These people, he added, could now avail themselves of cheaper but good quality NFA rice.

Marta said the NFA was now selling its P29-per-kilo rice, or commercial grade NFA rice, in accredited outlets in public markets and would soon sell in the market its P35-per-kilo premium grade NFA rice.

He said the introduction in the market of these good quality NFA rice would provide buyers a choice between the cheaper government rice and well-milled commercial rice which costs from P42 to P48.

Marta disclosed that they would later family the NFA rice with enzymatrimina, making it not only healthful but also easy to digest.

"As stated in Manila, when they have the fortified rice sold in the market the long queue became shorten. It's not easy to divert or sell as commercial rice the fortified rice because there is a distinction," he said.

Fortified rice, he explained, had a yellow tint that made its appearance different from that of commercial rice.

Paper firm's area tightly watched vs poachers

BUTUAN CITY—GOVERNMENT officials have tightened their watch over the transport of forest products from the huge concession areas of Paper Industries Corp. of the Philippines (Pricon) in Bislig City.

Tirso del Sur said Agusan del Sur to prevent timber poaching in the wake of reports that Pricon Asia's largest paper mill using firm is closing shop.

Recently, some cards are issued by the Department of Social Welfare and Development upon it stop its milling and logging operations on June 13.

Reports about Pricop stopping its operations have bothered the labor group since the company has not yet paid the salaries and benefits of hundreds of workers.

Joselito Burlasas, president of labor group Bwasa, said they learned about Pricop's imminent closure after they received reports that the Land Bank of the Philippines has imposed a "stay order" to freeze the movement of company's facilities inside the plant compound due to huge unpaid loans.

Burlasas said he also received information that electricity inside the compound has been cut off after the management failed to pay its bills for several months.

Feliberto Ruiez, DENR director for the Caraga Region, said they have been in touch with DENR Secretary Lito Atienza Jr. since last month to inform the concerned officials about the situation of the forest resources in the Pricop area.

Bislig City packs prime Pricon Falcon had reported to the DENR the widespread cutting of trees in the area, but Ruiez said this has yet to be verified.

Bislig Community Forestry Resource and Environment Officer Ely Bere Philip Calimpang and Ilaya's gas del Sur's Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Officer Diego Bacuno found logs scattered around when they made a quick on-site inspection in some service roads inside the Pricop area over the weekend.

Bacuno said his men took several boats to haul the logs on the river but were unable to reach the concession area, but the logs were just too many the two trucks they used in the retrieval operations were insufficient.

The DENR has imposed "Oplan Poke," in which at least six pieces of six timber handlers units are driven into different parts of the logs to discourage timber poachers from cutting it, but the vehicles of the protected and military escorts have been constantly buttressed by yuncured trees owning to spikes placed by the poachers along the area.

In his report to Atienza, Boiser said the DENR has initiated punitive actions to protect the forest within the Pricop area. He said a team of officials from the 36th Infantry Battalion and the Philippine National Police have been sent to provide security to the DENR personnel in the operations.

Rhando Calderon, DENR director for Southern Mindanao, said all wood processing plants in Davao City have been discouraged from buying logs and lumber products from operators in Bislig City and Agusan del Sur. Chris V. Bengcillon, Inquirer Mindanao

More kids out of school, according to NSCB

By Jaime Laya
Inquirer Research

To reverse the dwindling number of school enrollees due to widespread poverty, Lapus said that the DepEd was fine-tuning its efforts to get children aged 5-11 years old to school.

He said studies showed that if students in the primary school were prepared well until they reach the third grade, they were most likely to stay in school.

The DepEd's recent projects like the alternative learning system, feeding programs, and the "no collection and no uniform policies" are primarily intended to make sure that schoolchildren are able to enroll and stay in school, Lapus said.

He said the DepEd was also counting on the private sector to support basic education. He said that private sector through the adopt-a-school program, for example, had contributed P4.05 billion to DepEd from only P400 million in 2003.

"We expect significant improvements in the participation rates with all three measures," said Lapus.

The NSCB said the number of Filipino children who did not have access to primary education worsened to 18.8 percent of the school-age population in the school-year ending 2003 from 15.6 percent the previous year for the cause of the rising cost of living.

The latest number of children who did not have access to elementary education was even worse compared with the 9.7 percent recorded in school year ending 2001.

The figures were based on a report released every the weekend by the NSCB. The report said that the net enrollment ratio for elementary education settled at 81.2 percent in school year 2000-2001, falling from 84.4 percent the previous school year.

Net enrollment ratio is the proportion of children going to school to the total number of school-age children. For elementary the official school age is between 6 and 11 years old.

Millennium don't goal off

The NSCB said the failure of the country's second wave of its school-age children to school kept it off track of the internationally target under the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) that all Filipino children will have access to basic education by 2015.

One of the 17 regions of the country, Western Visayas was the worst performers in the region, 23 percent of children ages 6 to 11 years old were not staying in elementary school. This translated to a net enrollment ratio of 75 percent.

The best performer was the National Capital Region, where only 7.1 percent of elementary-age children were not in school, translating to a net enrollment ratio of 92.9 percent.

The number of Filipino youths aged 12 to 15 who were not able to attend high school stood at 91.4 percent of their population, translating to a net enrollment ratio of 58.3 percent.

The latest number of out-of-high school youths was slightly better than the 91.3 percent recorded in school year 2002-2003, but was worse than the 92.1 percent recorded in school year 2001-2002.

Result of rising prices

Augusto Santos, director general of the National Economic and Development Authority said the rise in the number of out-of-elementary school children was a result of the rising prices of goods and services.

Although public schools offer free tuition, Santos said, some families still could not afford to send their children to school because of other necessary expenses related to schooling, including transportation, food, uniform and books.

"The government provides free tuition for elementary and high school. But the government still does not have enough budget to cover for other expenses like books, transportation, clothing, and boots," he explained.

"The decline in the number of enrollees has something to do more with price increases. Although increases of families increased, the rise was not enough to compensate for the rising cost of goods and services, such as those required in sending children to school," Santos said in a phone interview.

Getting back on track

He agreed that the Philippines was now off track to meeting the goal of sending all school-age children to school by 2015. But he said the government was already considering programs that will still bring it back on track of having 100 percent of its school-age children enrolled in school by 2015.

"We are providing a kiln of rice if a child go to school every day a certain amount of money to keep children in school. At the very least they are two programs of government which is intended to increase access to elementary education, which is a report from Secretary Esperanza and AFP

Lagdameo backs controversial no-common proposal

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
Inquirer Visayas

ILOILO CITY – THE PRESIDENT of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) yesterday supported the proposal lower of Cebu Archbishop Jose Dinoda, saying that politicians who push for abortion should not be allowed to receive holy Communion.

"What Bishop Dinoda said is based on Canon Law and we are all bound by it," Jaro Archbishop Angel Lagdameo told the Inquirer.

Lagdameo said there was no need for the CBCP to issue a collective statement on the issue because it was based on the laws of the Church, which any bishop could exercise.

In fact, he said he was also planning to issue a similar statement covering his diocese.

"It may sound very controversial but I feel that the bishop is only acting according to Canon Law. Bishop Dinoda's known what he is saying because he is a Doctor of Theology," Lagdameo said.

But the prelate said refusing to give communion to those who support abortion was "a general principle which applies to all Christians and not just politicians."

He said abortion was among those considered a "mortal sin."

This means that absolution for this offense is reserved to the bishop who may delegate his authority to a limited extent to parish priests.

Lagdameo said those who support abortion even though not committing the act directly "become accessories who motivate the people to commit sin."

They include those who distribute/help execute abortion like nurses, doctors or midwives.

Lagdameo cited three provisions of the Canon Law, which support Dinoda's pastoral letter.

The Canon Law 1398 states that "a person who actively performs an abortion may (automatically be) excommunicated," he said.

Lagdameo also quoted verbatim provision 1329 (3), which said that "in the case of an (automatic) penalty of excommunication attached on an offense, accomplices, even though not mentioned in the law or precept, incur the same penalty if, without their assistance, the crime would not have been committed."

He said the refusal to give Holy Communion to an offender was based on Canon Law 915, which states that "those who have been excommunicated or interdicted after the imposition or declaration of the penalty and other obstinately persevering in manifest grave sin are not to be admitted to Holy Communion."

Church population stand called 'parochial'

By Gemma Bagayaua
Inquirer Research

Bishop Gaudencio Rosales, chairman of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines' Episcopal Commission on Family and Life, said the bishops' conference was not against family planning but was opposed to the use of contraceptives.

"We are not against family planning. We are only against the use of contraceptives," Rosales said in a radio interview.

Rosales said the Church was not against the use of natural family planning methods

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Aplus METRO
Editor Peter G. Dipasupil

Busy weekend for thieves in Quezon City

Bank, Pagcor e-game outlet lose more than ₱1M

By Jeannette I. Andrade

THIEVES WERE BUSY IN QUEZON CITY FROM SUNDAY evening until early yesterday morning, taking more than P1 million in cash from a bank and an electronic game outlet of the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp.

In the first incident, suspected members of the Aceveda Gang forced open the vault of the Bank of the Philippine Islands branch on Capitol Hills Drive, Barangay Old Balara and took an estimated P1 million in cash.

Quezon City Police District Director Elmo Gratuito S. Abad Sapo, Commander Appaso told the Inquirer that one of the bank's security guards identified only as "Corbing" reported the robbery to them at around 7 a.m. yesterday. A janitor who works at the bank has been invited by police for questioning regarding the incident.

Police who went to the bank saw a large hole in the ceiling located just above the vault. They also found two screwdriver bits, two crowbars and a bolt cutter.

Appaso said the suspects that the thieves managed to disable the establishment's closed-circuit television and alarm systems.

"The thieves knew the security layout and the location of the vault. They must have been doing surveillance work long before they struck," he said, adding that they were looking into the possibility of an inside job.

Appaso said the burglars probably entered the bank after 8 p.m. Sunday when the guard on duty had gone home.

Meanwhile, a Pagcor electronic game outlet security guard was wounded after he was shot by two men and two women who later robbed the establishment at 5 a.m. yesterday.

The soldier, who pretended to be customers, made off with P13,000 in cash, the guard's soldier .38 revolver and the cell phone of one of the outlet employees.

The wounded security guard was identified as Sandy Montemayor, 25.

PO2 Joseph Dilo of the Quezon City Police District Criminal Investigation

Manila slaughterhouse supporters clash with cops

By Allison M. Lopez

A SCUFFLE BETWEEN POLICE and a group of rallyers protesting the city government's takeover of a slaughterhouse led to the arrest of seven men, two of whom also sustained injuries.

About 400 employees and supporters of Dealco Foie Gras Inc., the former operator of the Vitas Slaughterhouse in Tondo, Manila, held a rally at around 9:30 a.m. at the Bonifacio Shrine beside City Hall.

Trouble erupted when the group tried to march to City Hall but was stopped by several 200 policemen.

Dealco stockholder Hal Alcorcon, 25, and Ideal Ilarde, 24, suffered head injuries. Alcorcon, the brother of Manila Councilor Dennis Alcorcon, owner of Dealco Ilarda, claimed he was punched by a policeman. Ilarde, on the other hand, said he was dragged off by a policeman.

The two were arrested and charged along with five other protesters with illegal assembly.

"They had no permit. It would have been okay if they stayed at Bonifacio Shrine which is a freedom park," said Insp. Marcelo Reyes of the City Hall Police office.

Manila Police District director, Chief Supt. Roberto Rosales, appealed for calm among the rallyers.

He said their concerns would be relayed to Mayor Alfredo Lim.

The protesters said they wanted to attend a press conference organized by the Philippine Councilors' League at City Hall in support of Jerusalem Alcorcon whom the police evicted from the slaughterhouse premises on Friday.

The city government said it ran the slaughterhouse until it signed a contract turning over its operations to Dealco in 2003.

City legal officer Renato de la Cruz, however, said the contract reportedly turned from the city government could take over the facility should it find that Dealco had violated any provision in the agreement.

Lim, meanwhile, defended the policemen who bodily carried Councilor Alcorcon out of the slaughterhouse on Friday.

"They policemen wanted the councilor to go. I [Alcorcon] was asked what he wanted, whether to leave peacefully or to be carried outside. He said he wanted to be carried outside," he said.

Lim said he canceled Dealco's 25-year lease contract because of certain violations the firm had committed, including the non-remittance of one percent of its gross earnings amounted at P48 million by the city government, the illegal installation of a gate inside the slaughterhouse premises and other monetary provisions.

POLICEMEN try to prevent a group of rallyers from marching to City Hall where a press conference denouncing the city government's takeover of a slaughterhouse was in progress. A scuffle led to the arrest of seven protesters.

The law of karma

SAIDNA DACER-BOYES, DAUGHTER of Bobby Dacer, has pointed to former Philippine National Police (PNP) chief and now Sen. Panfilo Lacson as the mastermind in her father's abduction-and-murder.

In an interview with a newspaper reporter recently, Boyes made the serious accusation against the Senate-bubble resume when she testified at the Manila Regional Trial Court Branch 18 presided over by Judge Myra Garcia-Fernandez.

This is the first time somebody else, apart from this writer, has come out openly to implicate the honorable senator in the abduction-murder of Dacer and his driver, Emmanuel Corbito.

Boyes said that her father had a premonition of his death. He told his children that if something happened to him, Lacson should be held responsible, she added.

Boyes' testimony was in consonance with a murder rap filed against former police officers Glen Dumlao, Michael Ray Aquino, Cesar Mancao and several others for the disappearance and murder of Dacer and Corbito, then PNP chief Lacson was concurrent head of a parallel agency within the PNP, the Presidential Anti-Organized Crime Task Force (PAOCTF).

Some of his favorite men at the PAOCTF were implicated in the murders. Nobody moved at the PAOCTF without Lacson's approval.

Why am I revisiting the Dacer-Corbito murder, even at the risk of being charged again with libel by the gentleman-senator?

Because I want to point out that there is no perfect crime, and one who has chose to pay eventually pays up even after the lapse of many years.

The universe is governed by the law of karma: What you do to your fellowmen—good or bad—eventually catches up with you.

Lacson's former colleagues linked to Dacer's murder are now in jail or suffering. Aquino is now serving time in a US prison for another crime; the others are either dead or suffering so much they would wish they were dead.

That's how the law of karma operates.

QC workers to get 10% wage increase in basic pay

By Marlon Ramos

REGULAR AND CONTRACTUAL WORKERS of Quezon City Hall will have something to be happy about when they receive their pay today.

In a statement sent to the Inquirer, Mayor Feliciano Belmonte Jr. said the city government has approved a 10 percent increase in the basic pay of its personnel effective this month.

The wage hike, he said, was specified in Executive Order 709 signed by President Macapagal-Arroyo on May 1.

In a separate memorandum circular, Belmonte also ordered a P500 increase in the monthly basic pay of the city government's contractual employees who had rendered six months of service as of June 30.

The additional incentive is expected to benefit more than 6,000 "project-based" employees, including senior citizen volunteers and economically bonable workers.

Belmonte said the wage increase "serves as the city government's token of recognition" for its employees' efforts to provide efficient public services to Quezon City residents.

"[This] forms part of the city government's continuing efforts to spread the efficiencies of good governance that [city] administration [has] put in place since 2001. We look forward to seeing these incentives result in greater productivity," he added.

Belmonte said the city government has enough funds to cover the salary increase even as he assured the employees that they would receive their additional compensation starting today.

Lou Sarda, city treasurer Victor Endriga said they collected P6.1 billion in tax revenues for the first half of the year.

DID YOU KNOW

OF THE 25 JEC facilities in Metro Manila, 21 have separate cells for men and women inmates while only one has separate cells for minors.

Cyril Bonalaure
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Busy weekend for thieves . . .

From page A-17

and Detection Unit said the two men and two women entered the Pepsi 8-Game center at 8-C Delta Asana St., Barangay Valencia in Quezon and played for several minutes.

One of the men later grabbed Montemayor's cal. 38 revolver and shot him in the stomach. The suspect's outfit mates Lubasi Habon and gaming assistant Liezl Asenas in lock themselves inside the toilet.

The robbers then commandeered the cash register and took Habon's cell phone which she left on a table.

Police said the robbers fled with their loot on board a passenger jeepney Montemayor was brought to the St. Luke's Medical Center where he remains confined.

9 US troops killed in Taliban assault on base

KABUL—A TALIBAN ATTACK THAT killed nine US soldiers, the biggest single American loss in Afghanistan since 2005, was a well-planned, complex assault aimed at overrunning an outpost near the Pakistan border, a Nato spokesperson said.

The Taliban have largely shied away from large-scale attacks on foreign forces since suffering heavy casualties in assaults on Nato bases in the south in 2006. Instead the militants have scaled up hit-and-run attacks and suicide and roadside bombs.

"It was a complex attack, well organized and planned ... it was clear they wanted to overrun the combat outpost," said Captain Michel Filiatrey, spokesperson for Nato's International Security Assistance Force (Isaf).

The Taliban began the assault on the Afghan Army and Isaf outpost in the mountainous and thickly forested Posh Valley district of Kunar province just before dawn on Sunday, warning villagers to leave their homes before the fighting started.

"They chose their positions well. It wasn't just an attempt to rush the post," Filiatrey said.

The defenders, numbering between 130 to 150, called in air strikes from attack helicopters and fixed wing warplanes in fighting that went on till mid-afternoon.

There was no exact count of Taliban dead, but Isaf estimated militant losses to be "in the high double figures, close to triple figures," the spokesperson said.

Four of Taliban were killed, an Afghan Defense Ministry spokesperson said.

There has been a marked increase of violence in Afghanistan this year, especially along the eastern border where militants have effectively carved their war with de-facto ceasefires with Pakistani forces and launched more attacks into Afghan soil.

The surge in violence is also partly down to the higher numbers of Isaf and Afghan forces in the country entering areas, such as the Posh Valley where they seldom went before.

Afghan officials said on Sunday the Taliban fighters had infiltrated from nearby Pakistan to launch the attack. However, Nato's Filiatrey said it was unclear whether the militants had crossed the border.

But Taliban commanders in Pakistan were "a matter of great concern," he said.

Afghan leaders are growing increasingly impatient with Pakistan, whose new government has adopted a policy of trying to treat with militant leaders instead of battling them.

Afghan officials have blamed ai Pakistani agents being involved in a string of attacks in Afghanistan, including a suicide bomb on the Indian embassy in Kabul last week which killed 56 people and an attempt to kill President Hamid Karzai in April.

Karzai last month threatened to send troops into Pakistan if Islamabad does not take action against militant sanctuaries.

Pakistan denies it is aiding militants and says the Kabul government should try harder to negotiate a peaceful end to the conflict, which it says is an internal Afghan issue. Reuters

BUNDA CLAD Afghan women watch a Theater Festival in front of the empty cave of the Buddha destroyed by the Taliban in Bamiyan on July 7. AP

WorldBriefs

ICC prosecutor expected to seek arrest of Sudan leader

THE HAGUE—International Criminal Court prosecutor Luis Moreno Ocampo is expected onWednesday to seek the arrest of Sudan President Omar al-Bashir, despite warnings the move could impact on the crisis in Darfur. United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon said in an interview he was "very worried" by the possibility of Bashir's indictment, which would be the first of a sitting head of state by the ICC. The US' State Department has confirmed newspaper reports that Moreno-Ocampo will name the Sudanese leader when he unveils evidence in the court's new case involving crimes in the country's war-ridden western Darfur region. The world body says up to 300,000 people have died since the Darfur conflict broke out in February 2003. The Sudanese government puts the death toll at 10,000.

AFP

Gestures, if not progress, at Mediterranean meeting

PARIS—Leaders of 43 nations with nearly 800 million inhabitants inaugurated a new "Union for the Mediterranean" on Sunday, aimed to bring the northern and southern countries that ring the sea closer together through practical projects dealing with the environment, climate, transport, immigration and policing. The meeting was also an opportunity for President Nicolas Sarkozy of France to exercise some highly visible Middle East diplomacy by hosting President Bashar al-Assad of Syria out of isolation and by playing host to a session between Prime Minister Ehud Olmert of Israel and the Palestinian president, Mahmoud Abbas. The Union for the Mediterranean is Sarkozy's favorite idea, but the original conception was watered down to include all members of the European Union, not just those along the Mediterranean coast.

AFP

Anwar faces arrest after defying police order

KUALA LUMPUR—Malaysia's opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim could face arrest, police said Monday, after refusing to be questioned over allegations of sodomy, the same charge that was dropped five years ago. Anwar's headlan party said he defied the order because it was not served properly and he was angry over being barred from parliament where the opposition was attempting to mount an antigovernment debate. Police rolled out a massive security lockdown around parliament, saying Anwar was planning a rally in support of the motion to discuss the shortcomings of Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, who is facing calls to quit.

AFP

Japanese team developing palm-held 3D display

TOKYO—Researchers in Japan are developing a gadget that could enable people to hold a three-dimensional image of someone in the palm of their hand. They hope the gizGate, which is still at the prototype stage, will also be developed to move in real time and appear to speak. "The ultimate image we have in mind is having a small person in your palm," said Shunsuke Yoshida, one of the researchers in charge of the study at Japan's National Institute of Information and Communications Technology. "Suppose you have a picture of your girlfriend smiling on your desk. She could be smiling as a 3D image in a cube," he said.

AFP

Global warming may increase kidney stones, researchers say

WASHINGTON—More Americans are likely to suffer from kidney stones in the coming years as a result of global warming, according to researchers at the University of Texas. Kidney stones, which are formed from dissolved minerals in the urine and can be extremely painful, are often caused by dehydration, either by not drinking enough liquid or losing too much due to high heat conditions. If global warming trends continue as projected by the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change in 2009, the United States can expect as much as a 30-percent growth in kidney stone disease in some of its more arid areas, said the findings.

AFP

The WORLD

Lilac Lorenzo B. Suarez

Pope visit draws thousands of Asians

SYDNEY—FOR WIYOND, A YOUNG CATHOLIC LIVING in Muslim-dominated Indonesia, the World Youth Day festival in Sydney led by Pope Benedict XVI provides a rare chance to celebrate his religion with others.

The 24-year-old is one of more than 100,000 foreign pilgrims who have come to Australia for World Youth Day, many of them from countries in Asia without a strong Catholic tradition.

As he stood on the sidelines of a mile-long procession of thousands of pilgrims carrying a cross through Sydney's central business district on Monday, Wiyond said he was grateful for the chance to mix with other young Catholics.

"We really want to meet with all the other youth from around the world and share our faith and to know that we are not alone," he said.

"Sometimes we feel that we are alone to become a Catholic in Indonesia. We are the minority."

Like many pilgrims from Asia, Wiyond is excited about seeing the leader of the Roman Catholic Church in the flesh during the six-day event, which culminates in an open-air Mass by Benedict on July 20.

"We really hope to see the Pope and shake hands with the Pope, and kiss the ring," he said.

Thousands of pilgrims from the United States, Italy and Germany have poured into Sydney over recent days, with their numbers strengthened by thousands from New Zealand and Pacific islands such as Papua New Guinea.

The Philippines has provided the largest number of pilgrims from Asia, with 2,500, while 700 have come from Indonesia and 300 from Japan.

World Youth Day organizers refused to comment on the number of pilgrims from China, where the Vatican has long been at odds with Beijing over who controls the booming Catholic Church.

But 23-year-old Taiwanese university student Rome Lin said there were many Asian faces among the thousands of pilgrims around Sydney's St. Mary's Cathedral and surrounding Hyde Park.

"We've seen the Koreans, and some Japanese and some from China," she said.

The influx of young tourists has transformed Sydney—with groups taking part in impromptu sing-alongs around the city, confessional booths springing up in some areas and prison-and-area on the streets.

At a major merchandising outlet in Hyde Park, the Vatican's flag was quickly selling out and pilgrims could buy rosary beads featuring an image of Benedict, chocolate hosties and T-shirts reading "I love Jesus".

Lin, who attended a World Youth Day in Cologne, Germany in 2005, said traveling to Sydney appealed to her sense of adventure.

"Of course, the first thing is for the religion," she said.

"The second thing is I think Australia is a very beautiful place. And we can come to Sydney and go to the zoo, and see the Opera House."

It's a sentiment echoed by roomies Cecile Hamadeh, 20, and Karine Bassalides, 35, and their friend Sam Lucas, 23, who have traveled from Manila for the event.

Like most pilgrims, who are being accommodated in high schools and private homes, the three women are staying in a classroom for their nine-day trip. AFP

PILGRIMS carry the World Youth Day Cross and the Icon of Our Lady through a street of Sydney after it arrived by ferry at Circular Quay, Australia, on July 14. Pope Benedict XVI will attend the WYD event with one of thousands of pilgrims from around the globe expected to attend the various venues during the seven-day event starting July 15. ●

WHAT'S INSIDE

Alex files P6-M libel suit /A22

SPORTS

Editor Teddyboy S. Molandres Assistant Editor Francis T. J. Gobon

23 days to the 29th Summer Olympics

Another San Beda escape; PCU wins

SAN BEDA'S [also Paul Escobal (right)] tries to shoot over SSC's Gilbert Bulawat yesterday

By Cabell P. Tajon

THE SCRIPT WAS ALMOST BECOMING SIMILAR TO the point of predictability: San Beda grasping for leeway at the start, stumbling in the third quarter, before roaring to another come-from-behind win.

San Sebastian was the latest victim of San Beda's endgame brilliance as the Lions bolted out a tight 84-80 overtime triumph to gain a piece of the lead in the NCAA men's basketball tournament at the Cuneta Astrodome in Pasay City.

King Lion Peng Escobal drained four triples and paced the Lions with 21 points, far but bucket—a double-clutch bank shot from the baseline with 20.8 seconds left in the extra session...finally lifting San Beda to a third win in as many games and a tie with Jili Gerona at the top.

Jim Wong, who nailed a three-pointer to push the Stags ahead in 83-80 with 1:02 left, missed a 15-foot jumper at the buzzer as San Sebastian fell to seventh with a 1-3 slate.

"The team showed a lot of character," said Lions coach Frankie Lim, who admitted having difficulty breaking San Sebastian's zone defense in the first three quarters.

"We just refused to lose. We got a big game from Eric Dispo and big shots from Peng (Escobal). We conquered their zone defense."

Alonzo Lim in the dot of the Lions' winning rain-coat/Philippine Christian University's first victory in its comeback season, 2-05-83 thumping of Perpetual Help

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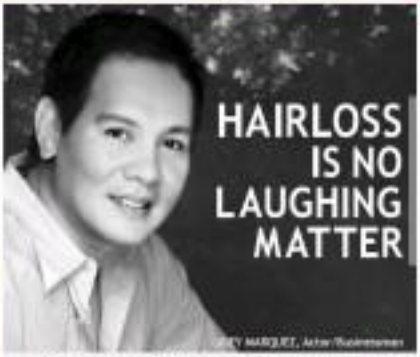

"I've been a comedian for a long time. I'm used to being the butt of jokes. But I can still be touchy about my appearance. When I started experiencing hairloss, people made jokes about it. I was even called Monsignor because my bald spot was increasing to the size of a monsignor's cap! I tried to not let it bother me but the truth was it did. Everyone with less hair you look older, and I'd rather be seen as classic, not old. I tried special shampoos and topical injections in States but with no success. Then I went to Svenson. After three weeks I saw a big difference. Now, when people ask me, 'Is it a wig! A transplant!' I say, 'No, it's my real natural hair! It's Svenson.'"

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Alex files P6-M libel suit

ALEX Pagulayan, known internationally for his crowd-pleasing pool antics, says BSCP officials ruined his reputation by accusing him of "shanking."

By Beverly T. Mendriquel

FORMER WORLD BILLIARDS CHAMP ALEX Pagulayan yesterday filed a P6-million libel suit against the Billiards and Snooker Congress of the Philippines (BSCP) for accusing him of "shanking" and for later withdrawing his participation in last year's Guinness 9-Ball Test.

Shanking is a pool term for acts that disrupt and disarm one's foe, according to BSCP in a media statement last year where it explained the reason for leaving the Bandaysan Pagulayan from vying in a four-leg in Shanghai.

The media statement was quoted in Pagulayan's complaint which he filed at the Pasig Regional Trial Court yesterday. He was represented by fellow pool stars Efren "Bata" Reyes, Francisco "Django" Bustamante, Roberto Gomez and Antonio Gabica.

In a 9-page affidavit, Pagulayan said the BSCP's pronouncement last year—which accused him of "shanking" his Malaysian opponent in the Guinness Test's Singapore leg—are "libelous" and have caused him "irreparable harm, injury and embarrassment."

"My complaint is they ruined my reputation," Pagulayan told court reporters in Filipino. "I've been giving honor to the country and they accuse me of committing what is not true."

The BSCP, in withdrawing Pagulayan's entry in the Guinness Test's Shanghai leg last year, said it based its decision on a finding that Pagulayan's conduct in the Singapore leg was "unworthy and unacceptable for a representative of a country that is regarded today as the epicenter of international pool."

"His antics amounted to shanking...the pool term for acts to disrupt and disarm one's opponent in order to win," the BSCP said in its media statement.

But Pagulayan argued that his actions did not amount to "shanking." In fact, he said, the promoter, the organizers and even his own opponent in that particular Singapore match did not complain about his play.

"So who complained? We talked to Ibrahim (his then opponent), and he was not complaining. It's [29] and the sponsors of said there was no problem," said Pagulayan.

Nida Reyes, who is also the vice president of the Billiard Managers and Players Association of the Philippines, said, if anything, Pagulayan was just entertaining the crowd.

Pagadian rules Liga's Zambo leg

LIGA PILIPINAS

ZAMBOANGA CITY —The Pagadian Explainers took over the league leadership by grabbing their second leg title at the expense of the Tagaytay Highway Global, 82-80, Sunday in the Zamboanga final of the Liga Pilipinas Zone eliminations phase here.

Meanwhile, the Lipa Batangas captured the Batangas leg by outlasting the Tagaytay Cavite Heroes, 81-72.

The Bandaca, led by Al Vergara's 15 points, outscored a 21-13 first quarter lead to 42-38 and never never seriously threatened.

For scores:

The Zamboanga leg

Pagadian (82) — Cuya 6, Gray 11, Cole 17, Alamo 10, Yap 9, Labagala 8, Dino 2, Tabuday 2, Dapalo 3, Cuba 2, Rosario 2, Dizon 2, Dapalo 3, Agbay

TGH (80) — Bandola 19, Valles 13, Jose 13, Bitanon 7, Lagrosa 7, Magsaysay 7, Labagala 2, Sabandal 2, Rodriguez 1, Barrer 1, Lapido 1, de Leon 1, Segarra 0

Quarters: 21-17, 21-21, 20-19, 20-23

Lipa (81) — Vergara 15, Custodio 10, Ritz 13, Erkiaga 9, Sanchez 9, Cruz 6, Manuel 6, Jones 1, Abarca 0, De Guzman 0, Alas 0, Dela Cruz 0, Bautista 0, Lumbatan 0

Batangas (72) — Alcantara 14, Dumalaon 11, Ramos 10, Tapawan 10, Carino 10, Cortez 7, Mendoza 7, Bautista 2, Dimaculangan 1, Pangan 1, Abuloc 0, Gonzales 0

Quarters: 20-19, 22-20, 19-16, 20-17

Eaglets unbeaten like varsity elders

By Jeanelen W. Payo

ATENEO SUSTAINED ITS WINNING RUN in the UNAP junior basketball competition as the Eaglets survived a scare to tie the defending champion De La Salle Zobel Junior Archers in the top.

Jamel Thompson shot 17 points, while Jayvee Hamilton nailed all seven attempts from the field for 16 points to lead the Eaglets past the talented Baby Archers, 68-58, last Saturday in the Blue Eagle Gym.

The Eaglets found upward their campaign by crushing the Wil Wallpaper, 101-38.

Matthew Capacio shot 18 points and Nicolas Eberle added 14 as the De La Salle Archers in another big win, 80-42, over the UE Pages, following a 62-46 exempling of the PRU Baby Titanettes.

In women's play University of the Philippines bested La Salle, 69-44, and University of Santo Tomas romped UE, 87-37, last Saturday to share top spot with 2-0 shines.

Well-prepared junior golfers hope for best

By Jong Arcasas

SAN JOSE, CALIFORNIA—IMPRESSIVE finishes in various tuneup events by its members augur well for a Philippine contingent looking for an impressive showing in the Callaway Junior World golf championships here.

The members of the RP squad formed by the Junior Golf Foundation of the Philippines joined the representatives of 40 other countries during the opening rites Sunday (Monday in Manila) at the Torrey Pines grounds.

Sunday's event marks the only time that the Filipinos will be together during the meet as the nine runners are spread out in this city.

"We're the country and prep for the success of everybody," Jungolf president Beng Ada Fua said in encourage to the players.

Unlike most of the 41 players who ovrlayed the 144-host Philippine Airlines flight from Manila, it was just a short trek from her base at the David Leadbetter Academy in Florida for the main Filipino player, Dottie Ardina.

All eyes will be on Dottie, now ranked as one of the best juniors in the United States, as she goes for a third age-group title.

The pint-Junior World tuneup events, Julius Carbo sees the O'Donnell tournament in Palm Springs and Chloe Reyes was champion in the US Kids World event in Las Vegas.

Another escape . . .

Postscript #41

The Lions, who rallied past PCU, 73-63, last Wednesday, looked poised to wrap up the victory in regulation as Bedial made it 74-71 by burying two free throws with 14 seconds left.

But Jonathan Soriano knocked in a long desperation triple with seven tenths of a second left that forced the extra period.

In the lone juniors' game, Al mond Vicente and Joseph Gat combined for 42 points as undefeated champion San Sebastian blitzed to an fourth win by beating Jose Rizal, 77-73, in overtime.

The game

First Game (Jrs)

SSC (77) — Vicente 17, Gat 15, Ramos 13, Sarmiento, Manlu Cruz 7, Nuñez 6, Ramos 6, Zubiaga 5, Hernandez 3, Bolanos 4, Manzanero 2

Jose Rizal (73) — Rosario 17, Abiog 9, Serrano 9, Arcangel 8, Perez 8, Gomez 7, Gomez 7, Diaz 6, Tan 2

Quarters: 15-20, 20-12, 18-22, 14-14, 10-5

Third Game (Sr)

PCU (63) — Rosario 17, Abiog 9, Serrano 9, Arcangel 8, Perez 8, Gomez 7, Gomez 7, Diaz 6, Tan 2

Letran (73) — Alamo 23, Jiang 8, Lo 14, Palma 9, Salangsang 8, Dungo 5, Sandico 5, Aong 3, Lo 2, Manzanero 2

Quarters: 15-18, 20-12, 18-22, 14-14, 10-5

4 GMs in young RP squad to Chess Olympiad

CHAMP John Paul Gomez

Final round 9 standings:

GM Gomez, J. (Philippines) 7.5—IM Jo, T.L. (Malaysia) 7—GM Cheng, J. (Canada) 7—GM Wang, Y. (China) 7—GM Ni, H. (China) 7—GM Ghaem Maghami, M. (Iran) 7—GM Ganguly, S. (India) 7—GM Ni Hua (China) 7—GM Ding Liren (China) 7—GM Bu, X. (China) 7—GM Parimarjan Negi (India) 7—IM Bhat, A. (India) 7—GM Cheparinov, I. (Bulgaria) 7—GM Cori, J. (Peru) 7—GM Cheng, J. (Canada) 7—GM Wang, Y. (China) 7—GM Ni, H. (China) 7—GM Ghaem Maghami, M. (Iran) 7—GM Ganguly, S. (India) 7—GM Ni Hua (China) 7—GM Ding Liren (China) 7—GM Bu, X. (China) 7—GM Parimarjan Negi (India) 7—IM Bhat, A. (India) 7—GM Cheparinov, I. (Bulgaria) 7—GM Cori, J. (Peru) 7

Final round 8 standings:

GM Gomez, J. (Philippines) 7—GM Cheng, J. (Canada) 6.5—GM Ganguly, S. (India) 6.5—GM Wang, Y. (China) 6.5—GM Ni, H. (China) 6.5—GM Ghaem Maghami, M. (Iran) 6.5—GM Parimarjan Negi (India) 6.5—IM Bhat, A. (India) 6.5—GM Cheparinov, I. (Bulgaria) 6.5—GM Cori, J. (Peru) 6.5—GM Cheng, J. (Canada) 6.5—GM Wang, Y. (China) 6.5—GM Ni, H. (China) 6.5—GM Ghaem Maghami, M. (Iran) 6.5—GM Ganguly, S. (India) 6.5—GM Ni Hua (China) 6.5—GM Ding Liren (China) 6.5—GM Bu, X. (China) 6.5—GM Parimarjan Negi (India) 6.5—IM Bhat, A. (India) 6.5—GM Cheparinov, I. (Bulgaria) 6.5—GM Cori, J. (Peru) 6.5

By Ray Leaños

A NINE-LOCK PHILIPPINE TEAM LED BY International Master John Paul Gomez and Grandmaster Wesley So will compete in the 38th Chess Olympiad set in Dresden, Germany from Nov. 12 to 25.

The 22-year-old Gomez and the 14-year-old So topped the 12-player National Chess Federation of the Philippines qualifiers that ended Sunday night at the Edsa-ng Hyun building in Mandaluyong City.

Joining them in the team building to improve on its 44th place effort in the 2006 Turin Olympiad are GMs Rong Villamayor, Jayson Gonzales and Eleonor Layla, who finished third, fourth and fifth, respectively, in the 17-round qualifier.

Gomez, a mechanical engineering graduate at the La Salle University, drew his 9-rnd-round match with fellow IM Rolando Tabuena to finish at the Peninsula defeatism ranked 6th in his with 12 points.

So, the country's highest-ranked player with an Elo of 2577, handed Gomez his lone defeat in the 10th round and then bowed 0.5 to Ronald Bancod in 28 moves of a Caro-Kann to finish with 11.5 points.

The 41-year-old Villamayor will be vying in the fifth Olympiad with 11.5 points, while Layla will be making his third straight appearance with 11 points.

Gonzales, a veterinary of the 2004 Olivia Olympiad, marched Layla's mad following a draw with Bancod and Gomez tormented Eliclito Galicia with a King's Indian Defense.

Layla outplayed IM Dale Gaviola in 31 moves of the English Opening while Villamayor split the point with GM Mark Paragua after 39 moves of the Slav.

Actually, Paragua wound up tied with Gonzales and Layla at 10 points but he missed the Olympiad berth with a lower tiebreak score.

PSC hits out at Bacolod softball execs

By Jaime Pilapil

AT SOME POINT, THE PROBLEMS SOUNDing the Little League teams trying to qualify for the World Series have to stop.

Philippine Sports Commission chair Williams Benedicto stressed this yesterday as he reamed Bacolod softball officials that organizational woes would earn off sponsors in the future.

The three Bacolod teams which were disappointive division titles in the recent Asia-Pacific girls softball championships in Guangzhou, China, were nearly deported after failing to come up with the $5,000 ($1.35,000) registration fee for each team.

"There must be something wrong with the way the officials handled the situation," said Benedicto, who went to Guangzhou to settle the registration fees of the teams. "They should organize everything properly because if these problems continue, sponsors will shy away."

Benedicto said the PSC had allowed P250,000 in each team for airfare but no allowances were given as everyone requested such.

At least 15 people were later found to have joined the 60-man Bacolod delegation in various other posing as officials and coaches.

"What kind of experience are the children going to get from this journey? I hope it will not happen again in the future," said Benedicto.

James Yap a shoo-in for nat'l track team?

BARE EYE

Recah Trinidad

PBA MILLIONAIRE SUPERSTAR James Yap should expect a call from Jolly Teng Kok, president of the national track and field association, anytime soon.

There was speculation should also be able to hit it off well.

Now, during their "the way she rehearsed working the tinged-faced PBA stars, which has entered an intense, bruising phase, they were more like sleepy rock band members promoting a low-cost brand.

Buddy Hernando, Sta.Lucia Realty team manager, was both displeased and alarmed when he learned the ref crisis should've been both quick and consensus.

* * *

OK, rules could also be used to cover as music in a ballgame.

But of late, there's often the need to police much on floor time.

No, the refs need not resort to treacherous like road-dog rope around Malacañang.

But using the volatile like a flute salesmen shovers, elbows and incentive fly on the floor is over-no.

"I don't blame the players, they never just trying to explore ways to win a game. The issue was the total neglect by game officials instead of preventing them, they allowed all the scythic bumping and trash-talking," Hernando told the Daily Tribune over the weekend.

* * *

Things predictably went out of hand.

And look what happened to poor James Yap, described by his rowdy wife Kris Aquino as the most popular player in the pro league today.

Yap, carried away by the unrestrained wildness on the floor, ended up exposing the shallow, ugly side of his temperament.

First, Yap kicked Talk 'N Text import Terrence Leather from behind.

Then was sandwiched-like Yap was only human, as Mr Aquino would explain on television.

Second, and worse, Yap stampeded like a frightened frog once the furious Leather turned around to get back at the handsome, high-scoring pride of Nigeria.

* * *

Sorry, Yap said later, adding all he wanted was to save his teammate. Jonathan Salvador who had shoved the ball at Leather, from impending harm.

It was also reported that Yap later approached the Talk 'N Text bench to apologize to some players and to Phoenix Fuel coach Chot Reyes.

Well, it was clear Yap was forcibly bothered. If not shattered, by the fiery incident. As a result, Yap, short of having a public relations firm, had to do some frantic explaining in both print and broadcast.

Kris, daughter of Ninoy and Cory Aquino, a lawyer and well-loved couple, also appeared visibly hurt.

That was quite unfortunate.

* * *

But Kris, plus, in Yap's case, it wouldn't've been a problem if he grew up in the basketball court in the days of legendary enforcers—Bullets, Baymen, Mobiners, Jawsmen, to name only four—who never ruined their luck at the sight of some hard workmanship.

These self-made family cagers operated on the rugged floor guided by no rewriting, unshakeable code: instilled a tooth.

These same legendary basketball warriors always waited patiently for the perfect timing before inflicting pain on opponents ... with a smile, a nose.

The days that these battle-scarred players had elevated into an art the practice of carefully creating discomfort on peeps but not to exaggeration.

* * *

In Yap's case, there obviously was the streak of an enforcer burning inside him.

He could've waited for the home stops to mutter folly.

It turns just one foul but the streak exploded at the wrong time and the wrong place.

Yap was completely unprepared for the moment of truth, for the upheaval he had invited.

In bullfighting, this is equivalent to the moment of truth.

Yap probably failed the test, the singular rite of manhood.

He has earned a spare to duck again.

* * *

Yap indeed seemed well, but what probably got magnified was not the heroic side of his superstardom.

You cannot not do a poll to agree that the right of Yap scrimpering after having indicted a cheap foam that bank did not sit well with the masses.

In fact, there were many fans, in Yap's case, he would be readily considered for the national track and field team.

This is not to say Yap may no longer be active and eligible to the PBA after what happened in that Purefoods game against Talk 'N Text last week.

But with the spinning gibe he had accidentally injured in hurting that heavy servant, Yap may be a shoo-in for Go Teng Kok's army of sprinters.

NEPOMUCENO: Another milestone

Paeng earns third Guinness record

PAENG NEPOMUCENO MADE IT TO the Guinness World Records for the third time after clinching the 11th career championship here last year, making him the holder of the most number of triple bowling titles.

The six-time world champion topped Melbourne's South Pacific Classic on Sept. 16, 2007, beating World Tenpin Masters champion Jason Belmonte for his 11th crown.

"This is a great honor and I'd like to share it with all my countrymen," said Nepomuceno. "Whenever I compete, my countrymen always give me great support which inspires me to always do my best."

The win in Melbourne also earned the 31-year-old southpaw the title Cricket of Lakeshida with the special class of Champion for Life from President Macapagal-Arroyo.

It was Supermacon's third presidential award after the Outstanding Athlete of the Century conferred by the late President Marcos in 1984 and the Philippine League of Honor given by former President Estrada in 1999. The Senate and Congress have also recognized him as the greatest Philippine athlete of all time.

Nepomuceno's name first appeared in the Guinness book as winner of four World Cup titles in three different decades ... in Macau on May 18, 1979; in Jakarta on Nov. 1, 1980; in La Mesa, France, on Nov. 8, 1992; and in Belfast, Northern Ireland on Nov. 22, 1996.

He was honored the second time as the youngest bowler at 19 years old to win the World Cup.

Nepomuceno has won in the Americas, Europe, Asia, Middle East and Africa.

Rambo S. Austria

TOUR DE FRANCE

Ricco posts 2nd leg win; Kirchen up

BAGNERES-DE-LUCHON, France— When Riccardo Ricco gets into the mountains in the Tour de France, he rides a natural high.

Ricco, a 24-year-old Italian, clubbed his climbing prowess on Sunday with his second stage victory in three mountain stages.

The rider nicknamed "The Lotus" struck when his rivals appeared most vulnerable, leaping out of the pack in the steepest part of the final ascent on the 224-kilometer (139.2-mile) ride from Toulouse to Bagneres-de-Bigorre.

"Let's say that this is really my realm, my domain," Ricco said. "I went all out to the finish ... I was really fast today."

Despite beginning the ninth stage with a sore right knee from a crash on Saturday, Ricco lowered pace a tired breakaway riders and finished 46 seconds ahead of his closest challenger — Vladimir Efimkin of Russia — and 57 ahead of race leader Rik Verbrugghe. Cadel Evans and most of the other would-be title contenders.

The Italian shrinked his deficit to Kirchen to 2:30 from 3:52, and rose to 21st overall from 27th.

Ricco was regarded only as an outside shot for overall victory before the three-week race. He said he wasn't even originally scheduled to race in the Tour — and had to convince his boss Domo team manager to let him take part.

Now, along with his victory in Stage 6 last Thursday in the Massif Central range, competitors are taking note.

"If Ricco rides the way he did today, he is dangerous," said Bjarne Riis, owner of Team CSC.

Spaniards yesterday Alejandro Valverde said Ricco "is someone we should all be keeping an eye on."

But that spotlight has included scrutiny about what he says is his naturally high hematocrit level — the red cell count of red blood cells. High hematocrit levels can suggest use of the banned blood booster EPO, but do not confirm it. AP

TEAM Columbia rider Kim Kirchen of Luxembourg wears the yellow jersey during the ninth stage of the 96th Tour de France. AFP/File

IOC paying for 4-man Laos team

BANGKOK—CASH-STRAPPED LAOS WILL send a team of only four athletes to next month's Beijing Olympics, with the International Olympic Committee (IOC) picking up the tab.

The Southeast Asian country, which has never won an Olympic medal, is relying on shot-putter Soukhoun Inthavong and taekwondo fighter Phouvieng Vongsa to be its marchers and flight riders and runners in two swimmers and two runners get a chance to compete.

Laos's Olympic chief Somphou Phongsa admitted there was little hope of any Lao to conclude but said the tiny nation's participation was all about putting their country on the map.

"The standard is too high for us to win anything in Beijing but we are proud to represent our country," Somphou told Reuters.

Laos's biggest sporting success came at the 2006 Asian Games, when Phouay Aphabouth won a silver medal in wushu.

Laos will host the Southeast Asian Games for the first time next year, although it has to reduce the number of sports by almost half because of chronic cash shortages and a lack of facilities. Reuters

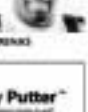
Arenas gets $111 million to stay a Wizard

WASHINGTON D.C.— THE Washington Wizards have re-signed Chris-Arenas 6th-year guard Gilbert Arenas, the team said on Sunday.

Terms of the contract were not announced but sources said it was worth $111 million over six years.

"Today is a great day for the Wizards organization," Wizards president Ernie Grunfeld said in a statement. "Gilbert is a phenomenal player and his value to the franchise goes beyond what he brings to the court." Arenas averaged 19.6 points and 5.1 assists in just 15 regular season games last year after undergoing surgery to repair a torn meniscus in his left knee.

The 28-year-old has averaged 20.6 points, 5.6 assists and 4.3 rebounds since joining the Wizards as a free agent in 2003. Reuters



ARENAS

Creamer prevails; Rosales bags ₱8M

SYLVANIA, OHIO— Paula Creamer shot a 2-over 73 and did just enough to make a big lead stand from the start to winning the Jamie Farr Owens Corning Classic by two strokes on Sunday.

Creamer, who captured her seventh career win and her third this season, had seven more days after breaking the tournament record with an 11-under 60 in the first round. She followed that with a 68 and a 70 to finish at 16-under 268, two shots better than Nicole Castrale who closed last with a 66.

Filipino-Jennifer Rosales shot a 72 and ended up sharing 15th to 36th place with a 279 total. 9 shots off Creamer.

Rosales pocketed $19,469 (about ₱890,000), her biggest paycheck in this year's tour.

Then you shoot 60-11 twice, it's the hardest thing. Anything over

CREAMER

that and you feel like you're shooting 65," she said, laughing. "Everybody's saying, congratulations, congratulations. It's just you're still got three days left."

The 21-year-old Australian saw her lead drop to a shot when rookie Feng Shanshan ... the first overnight player from China to play on the US LPGA Tour ... paraded her with five birdies through the first 11 holes.

Feng quickly fell back with three straight bogeys down the stretch, although she had her best finish of the year.

South Korea's Ji Eun Jee shot a 72 and ended up sharing 15th to 36th place with a 279 total. 9 shots off Creamer.

Rosales pocketed $19,469 (about ₱890,000), her biggest paycheck in this year's tour.

Then you shoot 60-11 twice, it's the hardest thing. Anything over

Perry tops 3-way playoff

CHICAGO—AMERICAN Kenny Perry won a three-way playoff to win the John Deere Classic at 16-16, Ellison Stanley and claim his third win in the last five PGA events.

Perry went into the first hole with a one-shot lead but made a bank of a chip in the green and bogeyed the 18th to force him to a three-way playoff with Brad Adamonis and Jay Williamson.

The 47-year-old Perry kept his cool in the playoff, making a par while his two rivals found water and bogeyed.

PERRY

"I felt like I gave it away and they gave it back to me.

But I fought hard, produced key shots at the right time. That was a great win for me," said Perry.

Williamson's think was enough to earn him consolation to next week's Buick Open.

Organizers of the John Deere Classic, in order to attract the best possible field, had organized on a rhetorical place to take players already in Manchester to prepare for the Open.

Perry has already decided not to play the tournament. Reuters

PING

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INQUIRER EXCLUSIVE: Angelo Que at Royal Birkdale

Proud to see RP flag at the British Open

(Reigning Philippine Open champ, so Angelo Que is the first Filipino to play in the British Open championship in 53 years. He made it to the Open by tieching in the top four of the single Asian qualifier on May 26 in Singapore. This is his exclusive diary from Royal Birkdale, venue of this year's hallowed tournament. — Ed)

By Angelo Que, as told to Patrick Faisal Joyce

I ARRIVED AT BIRKDALE LAST Wednesday. Lhiy Vi with my wife, manager and my good friend Danny Chia who is also playing the Open this week. So far, the few days here have been great and I have really enjoyed myself.

The weather was a bit cool to begin with but it has slowly warmed over the weekend. We played a couple of "links" courses recently so get a feel of things and it really helped. It is a totally different style of playing but I am relishing the new challenges.

I have been playing well, so having to adapt to a new style of hitting certain shots now makes me focus and concentrate harder. Yesterday I took a rest and Tracy and did some sightseeing in Manchester, which is only an hour from where we are staying.

The area around here is really beautiful as are very easy-going people. And the people are so friendly and helpful. I feel honored to be able to represent the Philippines at the venue where golf originated. Everybody around here knows the history of the Open and who is coming to play.

Today (Tuesday) was my first day to actually go and practice at Royal Birkdale. The magnitude of the Open is starting to sink in. It is a massive set-up unlike anything I have seen before.

As soon as we entered the grounds, there were already crowds on the course following players who were having their practice rounds. This is a Sunday, with the tournament yet to start. There were about 35,000 people out there. It was amazing. And I have never signed so many autographs in my life.

A lot of top players are already here as well, so the atmosphere is really building up. David Feherty from South Africa joined our group and played nine holes with us, which was great. The course is superb — great conditions, rough and very tight. It's a great test of golf, with the wind playing such a big factor.

By my count, down the 18th hole, with the huge grandstands on each side, I could see the Philippine flag waving on top. It was such a proud moment for me, seeing the flag and being here. And I look forward to making that walk right through and seeing Stanley.

Tomorrow will be another practice round in the morning and then I have to attend a Gala menu dinner in the evening. I am looking forward to that and will let you know how it goes.

Thanks to everyone back home for your kind wishes and support, especially my sponsors ICTSI and my family, of course. But for now

ANGELO Que samples the British Open venue.

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Dare to ask. Be an Inquirer.

Sources: Nielsen Media Index, Q1 2008, All Persons 10+, National Urban Philippines and Synovate Nationwide Urban Media Atlas Survey, January to December 2007

BUSINESS

Editor Raul D. Marcelo • Assistant Editor Carrie S. Mariano

BSP seen under pressure to raise rates

By Michelle V. Remo

Surge in consumer prices feared to go on

FOLLOWING THE SHARP RISE of inflation to 11.4 percent in June—the fastest in fourteen years—the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas may likely implement another 25-basis-point hike in policy rates when its Monetary Board meets on Thursday.

The central bank also hopes to counter fears that the surge in consumer prices may continue for some time.

According to Development Bank of the Philippines, the BSP is expected to further tighten its monetary policy in the coming months until the overnight borrowing rate reaches 6 percent and the lending rate 8 percent.

"Expectations of future inflation are also rising, judging by wage demands and various surveys," DBP said in its latest assessment of selected economies, including the Philippines, released on its website. "The hawkish BSP has repeatedly pointed to these pressures, and the need for them to be eased."

An increase in the BSP's borrowing rate encourages banks to deposit more of their funds with the central bank. This tempers the rise of money in circulation which, in turn, eases growth in demand for goods and services. Controlled demand helps limit inflation.

Already projections of second-round inflation effects are seen to exert pressure on the BSP to continue tightening its monetary policy, the Singapore investment bank Nomura said.

IN THIS ISSUE

- CAP to raise P1B from sale of bank stake /B3
- Gov't to bid out P8B in RTBs /B5

RP debt stock down 0.7% to ₱3.87T in April

THE GOVERNMENT'S DEBT STOCK AS OF end-April reached ₱3.87 trillion, dropping slightly by 0.7 percent from the ₱3.9 trillion recorded in the same period last year, the Bureau of the Treasury announced yesterday.

If the outstanding debt were to be divided among the country's population of 90.48 million projected for this year, each Filipino would have a debt share of ₱42,781.

"There was a drop in the overall debt because the government settled more of its liabilities, denominated in foreign currencies, than it borrowed. On a net basis, the government paid ₱17 billion of what it owed in April.

The BTr also said the appreciation of other foreign currencies against the US dollar helped reduce the government's debt stock by ₱20 billion. The Philippines' external borrowings are not only sourced from the United States but also from other parts of the globe, like Japan and Europe. If foreign currencies appreciate against the US dollar, then the Philippines would have to shell out less dollars to pay its debts.

But the depreciation of the peso against the dollar increased the Philippine government's debt stock by ₱13 billion. Depreciation of the peso against the US dollar makes dollar-denominated loans more expensive in local currency terms.

Particularly, the BTr said, the adverse effects of a weaker peso on the debt were more than offset by the positive effects of net repayments and appreciation of other foreign currencies against the US dollar.

The drop in foreign currency-denominated debt also eased the rise in peso-denominated liabilities, resulting in the decline of the overall debt.

Data from the BTr showed that, of the

BY JEROS G.

Currencies

PESO-DOLLAR RATE

₱ 45.246 = $ 1

As of 5 p.m., July 14, 2008

Stock Market

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX

(See more market report on Page B2)

Shares close up

SHARE PRICES YESTERDAY CLOSED 0.6 percent higher as some investors picked up bargains despite general caution ahead of this week's central bank meeting on interest rates, dealers said.

The composite index added 19.28 points to 2,857.37. The all-shares index rose 9.91 points to 1,951.65. Fifty-eight issues advanced, 24 declined and 43 were unchanged.

Turnover rose to ₱1.7 billion ($37.1 million) from ₱1.835 billion on Friday.

"Issues are already at candy prices, and any investor will find most of the blue-chips at attractive levels," Activ del Castillo of First Grade Holdings told Dow Jones Newswires.

He expects the market to consolidate in a tight 2,858-2,880 points band Tuesday as investors stay on the sidelines ahead of

(MARKET) B3

Galoc's first oil delayed again

Startup most likely in August

By Abigail L. Ho

THE FIRST OIL FROM THE GALOC FIELD in offshore Northwest Palawan has been delayed anew and is now expected to be drawn in August.

The startup was originally slated for the first quarter of the year.

Jeanice Williams, deputy managing director of 22.28 percent shareholder Vicra Petroleum Ltd., said that due to Typhoon "Frank" which hit the country last month, the floating production storage and offloading (FPSO) facility was removed from the site to prevent damage.

It was later discovered, however, that the retrieval line linked to the FPSO was damaged it reportedly also sank.

This facility will be used to extract 17,000 barrels of oil per day from the field.

Williams said current operations involved efforts to attach a new retrieval line to the mooring system.

"Once the new retrieval line is installed, the mooring and riser systems will be raised, overhauled and connected to the FPSO. This will be followed by a full systems subsea and topsides check prior to first oil production," she added.

However, Alex Darby, chief executive of 18.28-percent shareholder Otto Energy Ltd., said the damage was found in secondary tier of the riser and this had to be replaced. The replacement will come from Singapore and is expected to arrive within this month.

"As the moment, the FPSO will remain in the field and function testing of the umbilical and wellhead valves will be undertaken as part of the integrity and systems safety check required prior to flowing oil," he told the Australian Stock Exchange.

"Otto will provide an update as to the redeployment timing for these oil once additional information is provided by operator-partner operator Galoc Production Co. and FPSO owner and operator) Bulwion. However, initial indications are it will now probably be in August," he added.

He said that while the delays to first oil were very "frustrating" for Otto, the project fundamentals – including the reserves, well deliverability and high oil prices – were still commercially robust.

Independent appraiser Gaffney, Cline and Associates had estimated the production rate at the Galoc field to reach 23,000 barrels a day on the average, on the first year of production.

PAL Express opens 5 new routes

By Rina T. Chiboneles

PHILIPPINE AIRLINES' LOW-FARE BRAND, PAL Express, is launching five new flights to Visayas and Mindanao today, hoping to boost local tourism in Central Philippines.

In a statement, the number company said PAL Express would kick off its inaugural flight today to Cagayan, Surigao via flight PR 391 from Manila. The route will be served by a Bombardier Q400 turbo-propeller aircraft. At full capacity, the aircraft seats 76 passengers.

PAL Express is also opening today separate daily operations from Manila to San Jose (Occidental Mindoro), Iloilo (Cabatuan-town) and Surigao City (Surigao del Norte), a major gateway to Mindanao.

Its three flights-a-week service to Catarman in Northern Samar, will start on Aug. 1.

"The new air links are expected to spur development in these areas, PAL said.

PAL first flew to Cagayan in 1958, making the city among the Flag Carrier's oldest destinations. PAL last operated there in 1998 when its rehabilitation plan forced it to focus only on major trunk routes.

Paulson to the rescue

A WOMAN SHOPPING IN A SUPERMARKET bought one pint of low-fat milk, a dozen eggs, a quart of orange juice, a head of lettuce, a can of coffee and a pound of bacon. The cashier behind her said: "You must be single."

The woman was puzzled because there was nothing in her shopping cart that indicated her marital status. Curious, she asked the man, "You are right, but how did you know?"

The man replied, "Because you are so ugly!"

Attention have discovered a food that diminishes a woman's sex drive by 40 percent. It is called wedding cake.

At a party, a giant asked my wife, "Why are you wearing your wedding ring on the wrong hand?" She replied, "I married the wrong man." The always wanted to marry a scientist because the man that one does matter. Alas, I have just been downgraded.

My daughter asked, "Is it true, Dad, that in some parts of India, a man doesn't know his wife until he marries her?" I replied, "But happens in every country."

My spouse said, "I never know what happiness was until I got married and by then, it was too late." She also said that all women's problems are due to men, the example, MEWol (Boss), MEN-tal (enough), MEN-tal breakdown, MEN-opause, Of'mecologist and I Blow to you.

FOR MONTHS, I have been hearish of Wall Street and last week, even more so. My worst fears were realized when IndyMac Bank was shut down at 7 p.m. after depositors had withdrawn $4.00 billion. The FED regulators took over the bank and transferred it temporarily to the Federal Deposit Insurance Corp. According to FDIC, 10,000 customers could lose up to $500 million in uninsured deposits. The failure, the most expensive since 1984, could cost $4 billion to $8 billion. FDIC will try to find a buyer within a month in order to minimize customer's losses.

IndyMac had assets of $32 billion and a deposit of $19 billion.

The FDIC then said, "There will be increased failures but it will be within the range of what we can handle. People should not worry. People with uninsured deposits up to $100,000 will get their money back." In the meantime, customers will have access to their funds by ATM, debit cards and checks. Over the last two years, the shares have dropped 95 percent so the writing was on the wall. IndyMac lost $184 million in the first quarter and was expecting a bigger loss for the second quarter. That is the fifth bank to fail this year and to all, FDIC had to take over 125 banks with assets of $221 billion.

The seven new Freddie Mac and Fannie Mae shares 50 percent in early trading saved fears that they could stay afloat.

Treasury Secretary Paulson made some optimistic statements as the shares zoomed more than half their losses but are 75 percent off their highs. These two government mortgage lenders do not deal in billions but in trillions, $5 trillion to be precise. That represents 50 percent of all the nation's home debt, so billion to help them wouldn't spell total disaster to the housing market and plunge the economy into a deep recession.

Paulson has just announced that Congress will put its weight behind the first and last such company up to $2.25 billion at 2.25 percent. There will be certain conditions so as to protect the taxpayer, but this will come as a relief to the market, which should open higher.

Pervasiveness caused the shares of Lehman Brothers to drop another 17 percent, bringing its total decline this year to 78 percent. Last Thursday, Lehman Brothers caused the market by announcing a second-quarter loss of $2.8 billion. All the other banks were affected, i.E. Morgan fell 3.9 percent and Goldman Sachs, 6.5 percent. Lehman has been hurt by a sharp slowdown in its fixed income business, a series of write-downs and hedge strategies that backfired. The bank plans to raise $6 billion, $4 billion through the sale of common stock and the balance through preferred stock.

GE announced second quarter profits down 6 percent, slightly more than expected, but the shares were little changed. GE said it would sell its plastics consumer finance business for $3.4 billion and seemed to spin off its lighting and appliances businesses. I find this a little surprising, as these are the products for which they are known.

The oil prices made yet another high, as Friday is trending or trading, reaching $147.27 before closing at $145.08. That is bad news for all countries that import and any move through $150 would have a negative psychological effect. The dollar fell against the yen and the euro. Gold jumped almost $19 to $956.20 an ounce. The trade deficit improved rate percent to $60 billion. The trade deficit with Saudi Arabia, Indonesia, Nigeria and Venezuela hit a record high of $17.29 billion in May.

Most Asian markets followed the decline as Wall Street and the Pharm rate no exception. The market had another down week except for Monday, which has had a sustained recovery lasting seven days. The only good thing that can be said was that gross turnover was light and declined to P1.5 billion. Clearly, as these levels, investors reluctant to trade. Yesterday the Phisix opened lower but closed higher on the bullish of the mortgage lenders. Inflation at 11.4 percent is among the highest in Asia and with the price of oil rising steadily the past few weeks and to $145. Most analysts are expecting it to double in price. The inflation rate in Zimbabwe is now 165,000 percent so somebody

M. BEARBULL

MR. BEARBULL

Bear Nakbare

ST. LUKE'S Medical Center held a topping-off ceremony for its P4-billion construction project at the Global City in Taguig. The 14-story hospital, built on a 1.6-hectare property, is scheduled for completion in October next year. The ceremony was led by (L-R) St. Luke's board of trustees vice chair Frederick Ee, Jimmy Ayala of Ayala Land Inc., chair Robert P. Kuan, president and CEO Joe Lucenario, Fernando Zobel of Ayala Development Corp., Taguig City Vice Mayor George Elias, Bonifacio Campus of Fort Bonifacio Development Corp. and Manuel Zamora, trustee

CAP to raise ₱1B from sale of bank stake

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

THE GROUP OF PRIMARILY Jesus College Autonomous Phils. Philippines Inc. is expected to raise approximately P1 billion from the sale of its 19-percent stake in Bank of Commerce (BOC).

The sale of the BOC shares will provide much needed funds that may be used to partly service plan benefits for 2007 and 2008, worth roughly P2 billion.

In a recent memo it filed with the Makati Regional Trial Court, CAP sought the court's approval to sell 3.673 million common shares in BOC to Asiatic Asia Opportunities Pte Ltd (the Asian private equity fund of Australian media mogul James Packer).

The sale of CAP's shares in BOC is part of the pre-need firm's revised business plan for corporate rehabilitation.

In an April 4 agreement, CAP said it would sell its BOC shares to Asiatic provided that the purchase price would total P784.05 million, or P200 per share, to be paid upon the court's approval of the sale.

The group also plans to sell the BOC shares of CAP Retirement, CAP Pension and other CAP stockholders, in sum an additional P200 million... rounding off the sale at roughly P1 billion.

Sources said Asiatic's decision to buy the BOC shares was boosted by the entry of Ana Miguel into the bank.

The Ana Miguel Trinidad, through real-estate arm San Miguel Properties Inc., will feed up in order in the bank to 11 percent from 24 percent.

Analysts estimated that the 51-percent stake in BOC would be worth P5 billion. With San Miguel earlier investing P3 billion for a stake in the bank, the group would need to shell out an additional P1 billion to secure control, or 51 percent, of the bank.

PSE to buy back shares of inactive brokers

THE PHILIPPINE STOCK EXchange (PSE) has received the consent of its board to buy back 1,000,000 PSE shares held by two inactive stock brokerages.

The PSE said in a disclosure that it would participate in a public auction to be conducted by its trustee liquidator Riviera to buy back the stake held by Asian Capital Equities Inc. and Mistico Ostmiltz y Co.

The brokers reportedly each hold 50,000 PSE shares. The shares last traded at P625 apiece on July 11.

The shares had already gone through two failed bids.

Proceeds and proceeds from the auction would be used to partly settle clients' claims against the inactive brokers.

Claims against ACSI had reached P123 million, while that of MSI was reported to be the biggest with P1 billion.

The PSE earlier said the trading rights of ACSI for FY2.5 million, thrilling up a new record for the bourse. The trading right is a privilege that allows a holder or owner to become a trading participant in the PSE.

After ACSI collapsed in 2002, the SEC ordered PSE to sell by public auction the trading right of the stock brokerage company.

A joint audit conducted by the SEC and PSE shortly before the company's collapse, uncovered questionable deals and accounts.

ACSI's downfall prompted the PSE to take over ACSI's operations in an effort to protect the interest of the firm's clients.

Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

RP debt stock ...

From page B1

outstanding debt, the biggest share of P2.361 trillion was accounted for by liabilities denominated by peso. Foreign-currency denominated debts accounted for the balance of P1.757 trillion.

Domestic debt rose up 5.5 percent from P1.162 trillion in April last year. On the other hand, foreign debt was down 0.6 percent to P1.719 trillion.

The government has adopted the policy of borrowing more from domestic, rather than foreign, sources to minimize to exposure to foreign-exchange risks.

The BTr also announced that the government's outstanding debt stood at P3111.9 billion in April, falling by 0.2 percent from the P3451.9 billion registered in the same month last year.

Contingent debt is composed of liabilities by state-owned firms that carry a sovereign guarantee. Should the firms default on these liabilities, it would be up to the Philippine government to settle them. Michelle U. Remo

Shares close up

From page B1

the central bank's meeting on Thursday.

Top-traded Philex Mining rose 1.5 percent or ₱6.90 on soaring gold prices.

Manila Electric surged 8 percent to ₱54, and Philippine Long Distance Telephone gained 2.1 percent to ₱3,475.

San Miguel A rose 1.25 percent to ₱40.50, while its B shares added 1.2 percent to ₱41.50. AFP

BSP seen under . . .

From page B1

asset bank said.

Second-round effects refer to additional inflationary pressures created by wage hikes, which laborers demand to help them cope with rising prices of goods and services. For increases allow the workers to have greater purchasing power, and this in turn leads to higher aggregate demand. If supply were to be held constant, a rise in demand would result in increase in the prices of commodities.

The regional wage boards earlier approved an increase to the minimum wage for private-sector workers. The governments also allowed an increase in salaries of state workers.

Recently, the Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board also approved hikes in transport fares.

BSP said the BSP would like to see inflation starting in the fourth quarter this year to help limit the year's depreciation and cap the exchange rate at ₱45/$1. The decline of the peso this year is attributed to the outflow of dollar investments due to inflation concerns.

The double-digit inflation in June was blamed largely on rising prices of fuel and food products. The Philippines is vulnerable to oil price shocks because it imports over 90 percent of its oil requirements.

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IG, FINALLY, THE HOUSE ENERGY COMmittee drops the compromise proposal to amend the Electric Power Industry Reform Act, aka Epira.

Now, the chair of the committee is none other than Rep. Jose Miguel Arroyo, who happens to be the son of the Lolo in the palace.

From what I gathered, Arroyo—the congressman—was instrumental in the committee's complete turnaround on the Epira amendment.

Now it is true then that, as a policy, this administration is now giving its full support to the Epira, which the Lolo himself pushed for in Congress, to the first place?

Ig seems that way.

Well, the biggest issues for tinkering with the Epira may be provisions on the so-called open access, metering, and-metering choice power suppliers, something like an open market for electricity.

Such a system should be good for businesses that needed a lot of power. You know, factories that use more than one megawatt.

Mikey Arroyo said that amendment to the Epira would be "senseless" this month, because everybody in the power business already agreed to speed up the implementation of open access.

Thus, all the other proposed amendments to the Epira, the House energy committee will pass on to the Joint Congressional Power Commission.

That, according to Mikey is code-I cut. It does away with all the long debates in the House, for sure. Oh, and also all the famous lobbying!

* * *

ANYWAY, the announcement of Mikey Arroyo should be good news to the business community.

After all, the move to amend the Epira has already elicited negative reactions from investors, particularly the foreign groups.

In a way, by amending the Epira even before its provisions could be fully implemented, this country is changing the rules in the middle of the game—again.

That can only be expected to drive away foreign investors, for instance, the Ayala Group of Mrs. Joan Povon Tinio, who are members of the Joint Foreign Chambers, said that the Epira issue is scaring away investors.

Last year, foreign direct investments in this country were down to $2.4 billion, which was pathetic compared to, say, Vietnam which attracted as much $9 billion.

Besides, business groups suspected all along that all the noise about the Epira had something to do with the government's firm Singapore—and the powerful media in it.

Under the Epira, Napocor must privatize at least 70 percent of its generating plants in Luzon and the Visayas. It also must give up its purchase contracts from private power plants. The Kuwait-owned ones, for instance?

Those are the PPAs, the power purchase agreements, made famous by the Napocor mafia during the time of former President Fidel Ramos.

It seems to the business group that the Napocor mafia is violating the good old days of huge kickbacks from such contracts. Woaa nice!

Well, at least for some based on the words from Mickey Arroyo, the move to amend the Epira is officially dead.

But that was a close one.

* * *

GOOD news for vehicle owners: The Department of Transportation and Communications approved the car insurance proposal of the CTPL.

It means the so-called CTPL, the compulsory third party liability which the DTI requires for vehicle registration.

The DBD just signed an agreement with the DOTC and the Insurance Commission, to effect authorizing the pro ject fund to handle the CTPL insurance of motor vehicles all over the country.

It will come out cheaper for the vehicle owners. For instance, for a private vehicle, the CTPL will charge only P979, compared with the P900 charged by private CTPL providers for utility vehicles, including jeepneys, the CTPL cost under the GSIS will come up to only P975, compared with P950. Light truck CTPLs will amount to P937 as against P825. Motorcycles will cost P260 versus P300.

The GSIS says that it is set to implement its CTPL scheme within this month.

Under the plan, the GSIS is to tap some 39 insurance and re-insurance companies for its new CTPL system.

So there goes what literally be eight CTPL providers are saying about the GSIS scheme, that the pensions fund will monopolize the business.

The issue opposite is true: The GSIS scheme will eliminate the "fake" CTPL providers that use CTPL certificates several times over—and at rather prohibitive costs to the motor vehicle owners.

I think that my number will like that. Aside from the public getting the real thing at a lower price, the GSIS-provided CTPL can ensure the bureaucratic red tape in the registration.

The CTPL payment will be automatically included in the registration process of the LTO, including the fee.

That should plug the leak in government revenues from CTPL premium payments, since the LTO—having received the fees directly from the public—will be in a position to remit the CTPL tax straight to the national coffers.

It is estimated that, from 2000 to 2007 alone, almost 40 million vehicles were registered with the LTO.

Guess what—only 17 million valid CTPLs were supposedly issued in those years.

That is how many "fake" CTPLs were issued to the public—some 23 million. The amount of taxes that the government failed to collect from those CTPLs could reach more than P1 billion.

That sins pay for 2,000 classrooms already.

Office of the President of the Philippines
COMMISSION ON FILIPINOS OVERSEAS

Exchange Visitor Program Committee in the Philippines
GENERAL CIRCULAR NO. 01
Series of 2007

GUIDELINES ON PHILIPPINE PARTICIPATION IN THE EXCHANGE VISITOR PROGRAM (EVP)

Pursuant to the terms [illegible] of Administrative Order 248 dated 31 January 1996, authorizing the Exchange Visitor Program (EVP), Committee to promulgate rules and regulations to coordinate Philippine participation in the exchange programs, and to provide guidelines and instructions to all persons involved in such participation, the following guidelines are hereby issued:

I. COVERAGE

This Circular shall cover all persons seeking to participate in the exchange visitor program sponsored by the United States Government under P.L. 256 (22 USC 2451 - Smith-Mundt Act of 1948, as amended) and Fulbright-Hays Act of 1961 (22 USC 2451 - Public Law 87-256), as amended, and other designated laws of the United States of America for the purpose of either one or more or all of educational and cultural exchanges. Educational and cultural exchange programs are conducted by the United States, foreign public or international

a. All Visitors listed in the non-immigrant visa issued under exchange visitor program participants;
b. Sponsoring institution refers to a Philippine entity designated by the US Department of State to conduct an exchange visitor program.

II. PROGRAM OF EXCHANGE PROGRAMS

a. Advertisements seeking businessmen participants in exchange programs must be approved by the Exchange Visitor Program Committee of the Philippines prior to publication in newspapers, or posted on bulletin;
b. The advertisements must at least specifically indicate the following:

b.1) that participation in these exchange programs is not for purposes of gaining employment or permanent employment in the US;
b.2) that participants should return from the Philippines after completion of their training program and comply with the two-year home country residency requirement (provided for in Section 212(e) of the US Immigration and Nationality Act); and
b.3) that the sponsoring organization is duly designated by the US government and duly accredited by the Exchange Visitor Program Committee of the Philippines.

III. EXCHANGE VISITOR PROGRAM SPONSORSHIP

a. Sponsoring institutions or their duly accredited representatives shall coordinate with the Exchange Visitor Program Committee of the Philippines on the setting up guidelines for the training and orientation of Filipino exchange participants prior to departure;
b. A sponsoring institution may submit a list of designated alternate businesses or business entities possessing exclusive training of prospective exchange program participants;
c. Upon request of the exchange visitor or exchange program sponsoring institution should not be directly or indirectly connected to any business establishment;
d. Sponsoring institution is entitled to be represented by only seven (7) representatives of the Exchange Visitor Program Committee in the screening of prospective exchange participants in their respective foreign programs;
e. The Exchange Visitor Program Committee shall coordinate with the Embassy of the United States in the Philippines on matters concerning the implementation of guidelines in the processing of foreign applicants.

IV. EXCHANGE VISITOR PROGRAM PARTICIPATION

a. Filipino individuals interested to participate in an exchange program must contact existing duly recognized sponsoring institutions in the United States which directly, like their application with the sponsoring institution concerned or its local representative, and not through local recruitment agencies;
b. Participants to the Exchange Visitor Program should not be charged directly or indirectly with fees by any private person or institution in the United States for the services which may be available in the US or Philippine government;
c. Considering that the objectives of the Exchange Visitor Program is to promote mutual understanding among the people of the Philippines and the United States, and not for the purpose of gaining employment or permanent employment abroad, all participants to the Exchange Visitor Program established in J1 visa shall not be required to obtain clearance and clearance from the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA);
d. All EVP participants or J1 visa holders must register and attend the Pre-departure Orientation Seminar of the Commission on Filipinos Overseas.

VI. REPEALING CLAUSE

All resolutions, orders, rules and regulations or parts thereof inconsistent with the provisions of this Circular are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

VII. SEPARABILITY CLAUSE

If any section or provision of this Circular shall be declared unconstitutional or invalid, the other sections or provisions not affected thereby shall remain in full force and effect.

VIII. EFFECTIVITY

The provisions of these rules and regulations shall take effect fifteen (15) days after publication.

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Easycall to upgrade network

By Nica T. Richards

SEEKING TO BUILD HIGHER DEMAND in its commercial program, Easycall Communications Philippines Inc. is spending the bulk of its P1.5-billion capital expenditure program on network upgrades to meet the demand for Internet access and related services.

Company president Ferdie Silva said in the Easycall stockholders briefing on Monday that about P1.1 billion will be spent to upgrade the company's Internet protocol (IP) core router. About P2.1 million will be used to improve network. The rest will go to voice over Internet protocol (VoIP) gateway.

Working capital will only take up P1.61 million of the spending program, which will be funded by a stock rights offer.

"We are going for an all-IP network," Silva said in an interview at the sidelines of the meeting. "We are a reseller of telecommunications services, and we are preparing our network for this so that we can pass on large bandwidth to clients and be able to respond quickly to market demands."

During the first quarter of 2008, much of Easycall's P4.81 million in service revenues came from subsidiary EasyCall eServices Inc.

Pasig River Rehabilitation Commission
5/F DENR Main Building, Visayas Avenue, Quezon City
Telefax Nos. +632 926 6468; 926 5233

Invitation to Apply for Eligibility and To Bid
Republic of the Philippines
Construction and Development of Satellite Ferry Stations

The Pasig River Rehabilitation Commission (PRRC), through the General Appropriations Act of CY 2008 intends to apply the sum of **Two Million Eight Hundred Sixty One Thousand Three Hundred Seventy Four and 00/100 Pesos (Php 2,861,374.00)** being the Approved Budget for Contract (ABC) in each Package for the Construction and development of Satellite Ferry Stations. Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at bid opening.

The PRRC now calls for the submission of Letters of Intent from Potential Bidders for the following contract packages:

Contract Packages	Contract No.	Location and Implementing Agency	Contract Duration	ABC (Php)
Package 1: Kalentong-Ferry Station	PR-FS-12	Brgy. Kalentong, Pateros, Metro Manila	90 c.d.	2,861,374.00
Package 2: Pateros-Ferry Station	PR-FS-13	Brgy. Poblacion, Pateros, Metro Manila	90 c.d.	2,861,374.00
Package 3: Mandaluyong-Ferry Station	PR-FS-14	Mandaluyong, Pasig City	90 c.d.	2,861,374.00
Project Description: Construction and development of the Satellite Ferry Stations in the following barangays: Mandaluyong, Mandaluyong City; Kalentong, Mandaluyong City; Poblacion, Pateros; and Mandaluyong, Pasig City.				

Bidders should possess a valid PCAB license applicable to the above lines and size of the contract, have completed similar contracts within a period of three (3) years from the date of bid opening, and have the other minimum eligibility requirements stated in the Eligibility Documents.

Interested Bidders may obtain further information from PRRC and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm. The complete schedule of procurement activities is listed as follows:

ACTIVITIES	DATE	TIME	VENUE
1. Submission of Letter of Intent (LOI, Authorization/Eligibility Documents)	July 16-21, 2008	8:00 am-5:00 pm	PRRC, 5/F DENR Building, Visayas Avenue, Quezon City
2. Submission of Eligibility Requirements and the Bid Documents	July 16-21, 2008	8:00 am-5:00 pm	
3. Pre-bid conference	July 22, 2008	10:00 am	
4. Deadline for submission of the accomplished Eligibility Documents	July 22, 2008	10:00 am	
5. Opening of Eligibility Requirements	July 22, 2008	10:30 am	
6. Post-qualification of bidders and notification to qualified bidders	July 23, 2008	8:00 am-5:00 pm	
7. Issuance of Bid Documents to Qualified Bidders	July 24, 2008	8:00 am-5:00 pm	
8. Pre-bid conference on the Bid Documents	July 25, 2008	10:00 am	
9. Deadline for Submission of Bids	August 11, 2008 (Packages 1 and 2); August 12, 2008 (Package 3)	10:00 am	PRRC, 5/F DENR Building, Visayas Avenue, Quezon City
10. Opening of Bids	August 11, 2008 (Packages 1 and 2); August 12, 2008 (Package 3)	10:30 am	

Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part II (2004 IRR) of Republic Act No. 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act." Bidding is restricted to Filipino citizens/ sole proprietorships, partnerships, or organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines. In accordance with the 2004 IRR of R.A. 9184 a contractor will only be selected to the Lowest Calculated and responsive Bidder who was determined as such during post-qualification.

The Pasig River Rehabilitation Commission reserves the right to accept or reject any bid, to cancel the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

Pasig River Rehabilitation Commission
Deputy Executive Director, Atty. Doris L. Bacos, Jr.
5F DENR Main Bldg, Visayas Ave., Quezon City
Tel No.: (632) 926-6468
Fax: (632) 926-5233 / 926-6468

Bgdr. (Ret.) EDILO L. ARORA, JR.
BAC Chairperson

Sultan Mining breaks into export market

By Abigail L. Hu

SULTAN MINING and Energy Development Corp., through subsidiary SRG Mining, has forged a supply deal with Switzerland's Glencore International AG for the delivery of 90,000 metric tons (MT) of coal from its Surigao del Sur mine.

In a statement, Sultan said the source of bituminous coal to be supplied to Glencore would come from its Lanuza, Surigao del Sur MG Mining produces more than 30,000 MT of coal a month.

Sultan says their Sultan Glencore deal is the second with Glencore since the company's first international supply deal.

Talks would be pursued with other potential overseas buyers to enable the firm to take advantage of high coal prices.

Both companies said coal is local cement and power generation firms, as well as customers. Coal had shifted from feedstock fuel to coal to fire up their boilers.

Sultan earlier inked an agreement with Coral Holdings for the supply of coal to a planned power plant in Mindanao.

Coral to be supplied to the proposed plant would come from the Daguma coal mine in South Cotabato and Sultan Kudarat, in which Sultan has a 12.5-percent stake.

Gov't to bid out ₱8B in RTBs

Bond offering mainly for small businesses, individuals

By Michelle V. Ramos

THE GOVERNMENT WILL INITIALLY SELL P8 billion worth of retail treasury bonds on Friday in an auction that will kick off the sale of the bonds, which will run until Wednesday, July 23.

The auction is expected to help the Bureau of the Treasury in setting the interest rates for the three- and five-year RTBs.

The Treasury said the maximum interest rates that could be awarded by the BTr during the auction on Friday would be equivalent to the prevailing benchmark rates less 0.25 basis points.

The benchmark rates to be used are the most recent secondary market rates for the regular three- and five-year bonds.

The RTBs will be sold through banks that belong to the list of government securities eligible dealers (GSEDs).

Land Bank of the Philippines, Development Bank of the Philippines and First Metro Pacific Corp. were tapped to serve as joint co-settlement for the sale of RTBs this year.

National Treasurer Roberto Tan said the government did not set any target amount to be raised through the sale of RTBs. He said the government was willing to sell any amount that would meet market demand.

Tan is projecting huge demand for the RTBs, especially since interest rates this year are higher than a year ago.

The RTBs sold last year fetched an interest rate of 6.875 percent for the three-year issue and 7.125 percent for the five-year bonds. The government sold P77.6 billion worth of RTBs last year.

With a minimum investment requirement of only P5,000, the RTBs are aimed at small and individual investors as markets.

Tan said the government was selling RTBs primarily to support the need of small businesses and individuals for investment options.

Due to the RTB sale this year, the government decided to cancel the two auctions for regular bonds scheduled for the second half of July. The government was earlier looking at raising P54 billion from the supposed sale of regular bonds today and on July 29.

However no be generated from the sale of RTBs will help support the government's rising expenditure requirements.

The Department of Finance, another agency of the Treasury, said economic managers had decided to raise the government's spending program for the year by P96.3 billion, from the original budget of P1.226 trillion.

The increase was made amid the sudden increase in oil and food prices.

DA to start ₱70-M subsidy scheme for hog growers

By Alicia B. Bonoan

THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE (DA) soon start implementing a P70-million piglet subsidy and feed support program for backyard hog growers hit by Typhoon "Frank."

This forms part of the DA's comprehensive rehabilitation plan for farm and fisheries stakeholders.

Of the amount, P50 million will be used to buy 60 piglets dispersal plan while the remaining P20 million will be used for animal feed subsidies.

Agriculture Secretary Arthur C. Yap said the subsidy program for the livestock industry would be implemented in Central Luzon and Calabarzon (Cavite-Laguna-Batangas-Rizal-Quezon). This will enable backyard growers to acquire healthy piglets and the required feeds for their animals.

To be implemented under the DA Gintong Hanapbuhay Ani Livestock program, the subsidy for the beneficiaries under the livestock sector would also include animal health programs and laboratory services.

Bureau of Animal Industry Director Dennis Cunhagan said the DA would also undertake a massive P50 million vaccination program to protect the country's hog population against possible Porcine Reproductive and Respiratory Syndrome (PRRS) and other emerging diseases.

"The program is targeted to benefit small backyard farmers in Regions 3 and 4-A, where we aim to vaccinate the entire backyard population to contain the production of healthy piglets that will grow in time to meet the high demand for pork in the third and fourth quarters of the year," he said.

Cunhagan added that the vaccination program would also be financed under the DOA Livestock program, and spearheaded by the BAI.

"We are not standing idly and simply watching prices of pork shoot up," Cunhagan said. "We are set to embark on a rehabilitation program to assist not only livestock and hog raisers, but also farmers and fishermen in 12 affected regions."

Even before the onslaught of Typhoon Frank, consumers were already facing high meat prices.

"This is why the DA is encouraging concerned and qualified groups to avail themselves of the Kilusang Ayon Sulong (Support) allocation for the use of 42 million hills to help ease the pork supply situation," he added.

Although there is no shortage, hog farmers earlier said they were expecting a tightening of pork supply throughout the year due mainly to the swine diseases that hit 20 percent of backyard hog farms in Luzon last year.

Mr. Bearbull

From page B1

will probably try to ring the.

Property shares have been battered on fears of defaults by OFWs but I don't think this is a serious problem. Businesses that you are still on an upward and frontier receiving dollars are more getting about. 10 percent more than they did a months ago.

Because of an 8% percent rise in the price of steel, all property companies have raised their prices by at least 10 percent. It is too early to tell whether that will affect sales significantly. If the central bank raises the benchmark by only a quarter of one percent, it will be of little consequence.

As usual, Lattou dominated the Mini Universe contest, and Kimber switching it made a record number of mistakes. They sold my wife by accident.

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Make Every Day Exciting

WASHINGTON—A U.S. government plan to shore up mortgage finance firms Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac helped calm markets on Monday but did little to allay fears about the health of the US financial system.

The US Treasury and Federal Reserve plans, announced on Sunday evening, called for sweeping measures to lend money and buy equity if necessary in Freddie Mac and Fannie Mae, government-sponsored enterprises (GSE) owned by shareholders.

The plan was launched in an attempt to calm investors after stocks of both plummeted more than 40 percent last week on fears the companies, pillars of the housing market, were under capitalized and the credit crisis toppled a fifth US bank.

Fannie and Freddie own or guarantee $5 trillion of debt, close to half the value of all US mortgages. Pledge created banks, mainly in Asia, hold $979 billion of the bonds and mortgage-backed bonds sold by the agencies.

"[There] continued strength is important to maintaining confidence and stability in our financial system and our financial markets," US Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson said in a statement that he read to the steps of the Treasury building.

"Therefore, we stand take steps to address the current circumstances as we move to a stronger regulatory structure," he said.

The dollar jumped and stock futures rallied on the potential message of support from Washington, which also drew criticism for using a potential bailout that could cost US taxpayers dearly. Reuters

Singapore to buy RP pork

By Amy R. Remo

THE PHILIPPINES IS SET TO start selling pork products to Singapore this year, following the accreditation of the Matuco Kilnat Packing Corp. in Pulilan, Bulacan Tuesday as the only processor of pork exports to the island state.

According to Bureau of Animal Industry director Gerusio Catilogan, the Singapore government's Agri-Food and Veterinary Authority recently accredited Matuco after it complied with the country's stringent requirements.

These requirements also include the assurance that Philippine pork is free from veterinary drug residues, Catilogan said.

Experts led likewise evaluated the facilities of hog farms, farm inspection system implemented by the government, good husbandry practices, cleaning, disinfection, biosecurity measures and animal traceability.

The Department of Agriculture, however, did not disclose the planned volume of pork exports.

To complement the pork export drive, the department is set to inaugurate this month a P50-million meat inspection laboratory constructed in Pulilan.

"Despite temporary setbacks, a bright future lies ahead for the Philippine hog industry," he added.

LIFESTYLE Wellness

Editor Thelma Sioson San Juan

PLASMIN
BLOOD CLOT DISSOLVER
WAS STRIKE!

A wakeboarding mom's enriching adventure

Metro Active mag editor Jeena Lopez became highest-ranked Filipino in CamSur World Championship

By Jeena Lopez
Contributor

WHEN I GOT INTO wakeboarding at 36 years old, I knew immediately that I would love this sport. Having gone water skiing back in the '70s and being able to ski behind someone's boat, I developed a love for that water sport. In the late '90s, when wakeboarding became a sport, I had been looking out for this rare opportunity to ski for fun.

Then in August 2006, the Camarines Sur Watersports Complex (CWSC), three months old then, started making waves in extreme sports. So I immediately planned a five-day trip with my crazy group of friends in Pili, Camarines Sur.

There were only a handful of people at the park. We all tried out our skills with the help of resident pro Ibrahim Buchanan. Luckily, I had experienced the Singapore wakeboarding park a few weeks before so I was able to get up easily on my first try. The next day, I tried the ladders, also known as the jump. It's the first step to handling the obstacles. I asked Ibrahim and Mramjit Bala to stay on either side of it, so I would not chicken out.

A WAKEBOARDING CO

Keys to boosting your child's confidence

Moms play a crucial role in cultivating confidence in their children. Kids look up to them for guidance and assurance, which, when given more frequently, can cut moms on the right track in giving their kids a healthy dose of themselves.

Put just like any other parenting task, bringing out the best in children requires specific attention and friendly advice from the experts. To help moms give that much-needed boost to their kids, Dr. Bernadette Garcia-Bandoy, Developmental and Behavioral specialist and Head of the Developmental Pediatrics Department of the Asian Hospital and Medical Center, shares some insights on how moms can make their children face our challenging world with confidence.

Early signs

Dr. Bandoy describes confident children as those who are able to interact comfortably with their peers as well as with adults. "These children can easily articulate and express what they like at levels that are appropriate or sometimes even above of what is expected of their age," she says.

Although largely determined by the temperament children are born with, Dr. Bandoy believes this confidence can be learned especially during the early school age when they gather more experiences. This is where no-gains confidence, Dr. Bandoy adds.

Windows of opportunities

Providing children with various physical and social opportunities such as sports, spells a big difference in building their positive self-image. It greatly aids moms in spotting a child's abilities and strengths, which in one way or another, can remarkably impact a child's future.

At the same time, as children discover their physical strengths, they also learn how to interact with their peers and grown-ups. Dr. Bandoy stresses that one way to widen the interaction skills of pre-schoolers is by exposing them to people of all levels and not restricting their exposure to kids of their own age.

Celebrating small wins

Dr. Bandoy further emphasizes the importance of showering appreciation for a child's accomplishments no matter how small these may be. "Affirmation is the positive component of reinforcing confidence," she states.

Such affirmation comes in the form of rewards which may not necessarily be material in nature. Giving praises for doing something good can go an extra mile in encouraging a child to excel even more. Thus, celebrating small wins is an important stepping stone in building self-assurance.

Raising children in the modern world

Growing up in a modern and challenging world requires all the confidence a child can muster. Moms can rely on professional advice as well as respected healthcare products offered by companies such as Wyeth in providing their kids with proper nutrition towards becoming confident children. Backed by years of expertise in the industry, Wyeth offers superior formula milk products for children such as Bonakid Pre-school which contains the nutrients needed for kids to grow healthy and strong.

There are now a number of ways to reassure moms that they can raise confident children. Giving the right opportunities to develop their abilities, strengths and skills, and showering them with affirmation are most these kids to become self-assured individuals who can face everything the world has to offer.

Wyeth

Paano ang anak ko kung wala siyang tibay?

Nanlalaban kaya, nagiging angkop pagsabay tuwing nakakasalubong ka sa iyong anak. At ang mga tanong mo sa iyong sarili tuwing siya'y may isang hamon na mahirap sa mundo. Paano kung wala siyang kalaban? Paano kung makasagupa ng lalo?

Kaya kailangan niyo ng isang ng sobrang mataas sa tiyo at kaya ang kulitan mula sa Bonakid Pre-School. Ito'y kumpleto sa sustansiya para siya'y lumaking tumalo na may tibay at may laban.

Batang may tibay.
Batang may laban.

Bonakid Pre-School is not a breastmilk substitute.

BMW'S Joery Aviñoá, BMW president Andreas Bärlein, Filfast Foundation's Vicky Fernandez Zubiri, golfer Alexis Ayala, Filfast trustee Denise Molina, broker Lilo CEO Vicente Ayala, Ana Soriano and Filfast chair Bobot de Los Santos

FILFEST Foundation's VP Tricia Elam, Vicky Zubiri, trustee Marilen Espiritu, treasurer Beatriz Prieto and trustee Denise Molina

KOKUAN cellist Sung Won Yang

Celebration of music and dance

ARTIDH Barreiro, Mike and Marissa Lopa

THE FILFEST CULTURAL Foundation and the always charity-oriented Insular Life Assurance Company Ltd. presented a series of 10 musical performances for the year.

Entertainment, all shows for the entire season is sponsored by Insular Life, and co-sponsored by the brand that's known for quality and style, BMW. During the grand gala, BMW hosted cocktails at the popular Belle vue Hotel in Alabang, where the performing artists hosted the second show was upon, naturally fortunate last.

Last Saturday was had a chance to enjoy the last season sponsored by European Cars. This July, see the incredibly mind-boggling performances of Latin Heat by the renowned Ballet Philippines, palanggas.

Next will be the Chamber Soirée. Xenos del Amarin Vil. Ignacio, pianist, and Renato Ignacio, cellist, will perform on Aug. 16; Filharmonika Orchestra members of Gliceanor Pianos 2008 and 2008, Aug. 30; and revival pianist Alena Lubra Wolfi, Sept. 13.

Chamber Series follows with On Chorus Ensemble on Sept. 27, Concerto Mozart with three incredibly brilliant violin-ists, Alfonso Sadiquin on violin, Jo slattery Cruz, piano, and wonder boy Gerard Salonga with the Filharmonika Orchestra, Oct. 11; and finally on Oct. 25, 26, 27, The Opera Divas.

Shaw Info? Call 6664995 or 0918-5615474. Thanks to Ayala Weargrove Heights, Smart Subway, The Bellevue Hotel Alabang, 3D Electronics, Little Pi and the ARTiT, plus, plus.

Applause is the lady who cares and wants to give everyone a chance to enjoy the natural gift of our race, Vicky Fernandez Zubiri, palanggas.

WITHOUT BATTING AN EYELASH

Photos by Alex Van Hagen using Ricoh GX100

AVIOM Navarro, Mako's Photo Ex and Sandeep Khanna

H.E. FRENCH Ambassador Gerard Chaliand, cultural attaché Georges-Gaston Peyrebon, artist Stephanie Sagot

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SAMPE and chair James Sublian, Philip Castro and Bel Elbueno

DIANA Tagaloa, Cris Sison, Alix de Guzman and Maui Taylor

HYLA Reyes, RPC channel manager Annabelle Dimla, RPC assistant trade marketing manager, celebrity player Nina Jose and Lizette de Guzman

NORMA'S trio popular DPI William Hamilton-Wayne with Alliance Française director Olivier Dimitrijer and Kati Queen Lolo Tan Dan

CHARITABLE and cultural couple Ambassador Chunfeng Tandoc-ing and wife Margo Amador

BARITONE Lionel Bocce and soprano Dinelle Barreiro

YOUNG acclaimed violinist Regina Buenaventura

STAR saxophone performer Tess Tolentino

FILFEST Foundation executive director Tony Cruz, CCP president Nes Jardin and CCP officer Tess Rocca

PINCO executive director Chingoy Lapitanon, pianist and Filfast art director Jovanna Cruz and Mutya Music School head Tess Soriano

Without batting an eyelash

Maurice Arcay for Ricoh GX100

Old Spice challenge

All the best happenings are taking place in Boracay. This year was different, palanggas.

Beachcombers of Station 1-2 witnessed a challenge where three teams with 28 players led by four celebrities had to go through the grueling tasks in the Old Spice High Endurance Challenge.

Believe me, aside the hot weather and hot bodies, Old Spice cooled the temperature down a bit.

Aside from the adrenaline rush one got from the race, it's the increased palpitation of seeing alongside celebs Pete Rosales, Nina Jose, Joseph Bitangcol and Wenzi Tudor that really spiked up the atmospheric palanggas.

There were tons of other obstacles like swimming and kayaking, nuh?

And the winner was Joseph and his team. After all, palanggas, only one takes home the player! And naturellement, the cool P500,000 prize!

On the last night, Old Spice High rocked the summer place, dahlings, with Maxi and Nina dancing without a care in the world. Go, gals, go! Now, that's to say when the party begins and stops, di ba?

Old Spice's awesome new and products for men and women are available in all leading supermarkets, drugstores and select specialty stores near you.

Check it out, palanggas, and be cool. Old Spice and Secret products are exclusively distributed by RFC Distribution Services Inc. and licensed by Procter & Gamble Distributing Philippines Inc.

PINSY Cruz tries to solve the puzzle.

POLO Barako executive BPO assistant general manager Lizette de Guzman.

Chic football shoes

UMBRO, THE FOOTBALL BRAND from the United Kingdom, has been used by high-profile football players such as Michael Owen, Gian Bleasters and Dave Andres.

Umbro now brings its chic brand into the lifestyle market at affordable prices.

It is now available at the outlets of Rep-al Sporting House, Shoe Shop, Toby's Olympic Village, Sports Central and sports sections of leading department stores nationwide.

Do ghosts grow old?

I RECEIVED THE FOLLOWING INTRIGUING questions about ghosts, which I have not been asked before, from a regular reader of this column named Jet Dave. **I thought I'd share these thoughts with other readers who may be asking the same questions.**

Do spirits, ghosts, fairies, orbs and other beings in the other dimensions interact with each other?

There are levels or hierarchies in the spirit world (or other dimensions) just as we have here on the physical plane. Those which are in the same level can and do interact with each other, but each plane of other levels. There are different degrees of vibrations or frequencies corresponding to those different levels.

We know this from the reports of those **who have gone before us to the other dimensions.** And from channeled information from higher beings and guides.

Some say there is the higher levels can communicate with those in the lower level **but can vice versa.**

Are they affected by time?

When a person dies, I assume his spirit in terms of "physical" look would be the same as how he died. I guess that's how he looked **when still alive.**

Do spirits grow old? Or do they stay the same? Somehow, I may be misinterpreting this idea because it's a bit hard to think of something that may not be affected by time.

Spirits are not affected by time, as we know it in the physical world, because time does not exist in the spiritual plane. But we know spirits of the dead also undergo some **transformation while physical time** on earth passes. We example, immediately after death, the spirit may look exactly the way the person died. And this is what has been depicted in many horror movies.

But later on, as the consciousness of the spirit grows and it no longer sad/bound or attached to his or her body, he or she will appear to the living in the prime of his or her life. So, the old folks will look young again and remain that way throughout his or her stay in the spirit world. They don't grow old.

Do spirits know where they are?

If they know where they are, does that **mean they can also be where they want to** be? If they can do that, can they also think and learn and become wiser? Again, a bit hard to understand the need to become wiser since we don't know what good that **would be when you're dead."**

After some time in the spirit world, the spirits become aware of other spirits **around them. Where they can go is limited** by their consciousness. But they can be in **different places they may want to be.**

A spirit of the dead told us the spirit world is just like what we have on the physical plane but it does not have physicality. In the spirit world, the spirits learn that they only **create their own reality.**

Spirits can think and also learn. Consciousness or awareness is not dependent on the brain. The brain is physical matter, which dies, but consciousness is of the soul and stream rule.

It is said that we don't stop learning when in the spirit world. There are many things spirits do. Some make preparations for coming back to earth. Others may prefer to remain there to learn new lessons from their guides and higher beings on that plane.

What good is it to be wiser when one is already dead?

I think you are forgetting there is such a **thing as persons called "reincarnation"** in earthly rebirth on the earth plane. You grow in each incarnation on your spirit growth.

Do spirits also experience something similar to death. Like we do?

Yes, when the spirit decides to go back to the physical world in another body. In other words, when the spirit reincarnates.

Remember this: Death on the physical plane means we become alive in the spirit world. And we "die" in the spirit world when we become alive on the physical plane. Does this make sense now?

For inquiries on books, paranormal services and seminars on Inner Mind Development, ESP and Intuition Development, and Meditation, Ravin B Bautista can be reached by this writer, call 8307245 or 8928809, fax 451-9890; e-mail innerawareness_2005@yahoo.com.ph.

INNER AWARENESS

Jaime T. Licauco

MEDICard. The Healthcare I Deserve!

Take Charge Doc!

By: Dr. Ma. Luisa Mendoza

What is the natural cause of dengue infection and what are its implications?

Dengue fever and the more severe form which is dengue hemorrhagic fever also known as D fever is an acute viral illness that is transmitted through the bite of a mosquito. The dengue virus has four serotypes (Types 1, 2, 3 and 4) which means that you may be infected with dengue virus four times in your life. However, once infected by one dengue serotype you will gain lifelong immunity against that serotype but only partial and transient protection against subsequent infection by the other three serotypes. An infected any living female aedes mosquito transmits this viral disease to humans. In the Philippines, Aedes aegypti and Aedes albopictus are the primary and secondary mosquito vectors, respectively. These rarely or carrier mosquitoes breed in our backyards, in our drainage canals, in places such as cans, flower pots and trees with stagnant water or even puddles during the rainy season. Mosquitoes apparently acquire the virus while feeding on the blood of an infected person. The human affects all ages but majority of the cases are among children 0-15 years old. It may also severely with fever and other non-specific symptoms that may progress to severe manifestations like bleeding, circulatory failure and death. Dengue is a self-limiting illness. There is no known treatment for dengue. Supportive measures are given like oral and/or intravenous fluids and paracetamol. Aspirin must be avoided because it affects the platelets in the blood and may aggravate bleeding. The best and most effective way to treat dengue is to prevent it. Eliminate all possible breeding places of the Aedes mosquito in your surroundings. Use mosquito nets if you live in a house that is not totally mosquito-proof or you may use mosquito-repellant lotion or spray. But most importantly remove all stagnant water in your house and maintain a clean surrounding.

GARFIELD

A. LEPIN

FULDOK

PUGAD BABOY

DIVINE COMEDY

MAKABAYANIHAN

SALAMPIK

BABY BLUES

ATOMIC AND WEEDY

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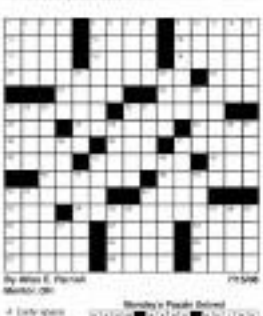

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DAJAO

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis Sudoku By Dave Green

	1	4	5			8		
	2			8	7		9	1
9					3			5
	9	1						2
	6					1		
8						4	6	
7			2					4
2	4		1	6			5	
		3			5	6	2	

Difficulty Level ★★

HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.

Tips and programs at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

1	9	7	4	5	3	2	8	6
2	5	6	8	1	9	3	4	7
3	8	4	7	6	2	9	1	5
7	1	5	2	4	8	6	3	9
9	2	8	1	3	6	5	7	4
6	4	3	5	9	7	1	2	8
5	3	1	9	7	4	8	6	2
4	6	2	3	8	5	7	9	1
8	7	9	6	2	1	4	5	3

Extreme strategies will sabotage your weight loss

By Mitch Felipe
Contributor

DID YOU ALWAYS HAVE A GOAL TO LOSE weight only to find out that you just keep on repeating the numbers and have never reached the think line?

Your weight issues will not be resolved unless you become aware there's a problem either in your thinking pattern or behavior.

The furthest part in weight management is trying to lose weight inadvertently not consciously or unpremeditatedly. Try to apply basic weight management strategies experienced by successful weight losers.

Skipping meals

Try to skip meals to lessen your total calorie intake for the day. Eat breakfast and have something every three to four hours. This will help prevent low-sight overeating and guilty feelings.

If a nutritionist requires you to eat a total of 1,800 calories for the day, seek ways to distribute your meals during the day by scientifically timing and calorie per meal. It would also depend on what time you wake up and sleep, your level of hunger and physical activities.

Over-exercising

Some people believe that over-exercising is the best solution to losing weight.

However, this approach results in injuries and exercise burnout. Over-exercise for three to six consecutive months might result in serious physical setbacks to the next months if not managed to moderation.

Exercise not more than 90 minutes a day. If you don't have enough time for formal exercise sessions, do a lot of walking. It's better to walk say 60 minutes, three to four times a week and walk for 30 minutes every day, than to exercise for two hours or more every day.

Weight obsession

People who are weight-obsessed tend to do the right strategies, especially when things run smoothly. But when they experience failures, they easily give up and return to old habits. They become susceptible to emotional eating.

Weigh yourself to see the result and progress of what you're doing. Weight loss is just the result of your eating and exercise behavior.

Develop self-control by staying away from perfectionist goals. Be prepared to experience failures and lapses and recognize that it's part of the process.

Being super-health conscious

There are those who will eat the healthiest foods available in the market and deprive themselves of the food they love as one because they believe that to lose weight, you have to eat only what's healthy.

Whenever I see someone in the gym eating slices of wheat bread with scant of fruits in water every single day, I always wonder how long he can sustain it. That would lead to boredom and result in more cravings during the day.

Get real! You can still eat your favorite food once in a while and still be a healthy person. A sweet study shows making your meals tasty by adding calorie-free seasonings and sweeteners can help you lose weight.

Be creative. Think of ways on how to make your favorite dishes nutritious and healthy. I always tell my clients whenever they feel sad about what and how much they ate eating, it means they are deprived. They need to change their food plans to suit their lifestyle.

E-mail the author at mitchfelipe@ gmail.com

It's better to work out 60 minutes, 3-4 times a week, than to exercise two hours or more every day

Life gets interesting at menopause

INSIDE OUT

Cory Quirino

IT'S NOT OVER UNTIL IT'S OVER—OR is it? Most women dread menopause because it signals the end of their reproductive years. But are you unproductive if you are menopausal?

Menopause happens between the ages of 45-55. It is premature for women in menopause before the age of 40 though it affects one in 100 women. Illness or a medical procedure like hysterectomy can also induce it.

What happens in between and now? The symptoms: hot flashes, night sweats, headaches, insomnia, tiredness, mood swings/signs, depression and anxiety, vaginal dryness, painful urination, loss of libido, dry skin. These symptoms may last from three months to several years.

What can be done? Hormone replacement therapy (HRT) or natural therapy.

HRT is replacing lost hormones with estrogen and progesterone to be taken for five to 10 years. HRT comes in the form of pills, implants, gels. Make an informed decision with your doctor.

Studies indicate that a diet rich in phytoestrogens-chemicals found in some plants may alleviate menopause, breast cancer, bone disease and osteoporosis.

Sources include peas, beans, brown rice, cereals, lentils, chickpeas, soy sprouting beans like alfalfa/clover/fenugreek, fruits, vegetables, bugs, green/black tea, virgin coconut oil and some beers.

You may eat three daily servings of soya provided it is non-GMO (genetically modified organism) as medical science does not know its long-term effects on the human body. The source of your phytoestrogen should be food derived.

Sleep in loose, comfy clothes, avoid hot drinks/soups/alcohol and spicy foods, eat bark on sweets.

Hot flash

When hot flash happens, take long, slow deep breaths, close your eyes. Imagine you are sitting on top of an ice cap riding over snow or having an iced rub bath. It should be seen to one to three minutes. Have a cool or chilled but not ice-cold drink.

Calming smoothie

Freeze one ripe banana and mango, peeled and sliced. Place all ingredients in a blender mixed with one cup soya milk (optional). Add one teaspoon of flaxseed oil.

Skin smoothener

Mix three tablespoons of virgin coconut oil with capsule contents of vitamin E (remove capsule). Rub all over your body and face.

Supplements

Take 200,400 iu vitamin E (mixed tocopherols) with selenium one to three times a day. 50-mg B complex twice daily. 250-mg chelated calcium, 125-mg magnesium, one multimineral complex twice daily. To brighten your mood, St. John's Wort Tea or capsule.

Oriental herbal remedies would include flaxseed oil, ginseng, dong quai, black cohosh. Do any mind-body exercise like yoga, tai chi, qi gong.

Life isn't over for you at this stage. In fact, you have ripened to a level of self-knowledge.

Affirm: "I am rediscovering my greatness each day."

Love and light!

References: "The Natural Menopause Guidebook" by Angie Jefferson & Fiona Dunne
"Vitamin Bible for 21st Century" by Dr. Earl Mindell

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JENNA prepares on Mads for his turn. The 7-year-old placed third in his age division.

JERNA Lopez rides off the ramp during the World Championship in Camarines Sur

A wakeboarding mom's enriching adventure

From page C1

I studied the process, repeating the mantra, "Bend your legs, bend your elbows and flatten your board." All through I was not able to land and ride away, I flew over it like a pro.

The tricks progressed to "grabbing" or touching your board for style. Then I tried the sliders which are longer flat ramps where one can do a multitude of tricks like ollies, hops and the more graceful looking presses. It was so exciting and addicting.

The rush was incredible.

But do not be foolish—the bad landing and whiplashes can give you a neck ache for days. Just get a massage or night and ride again the next day.

Almost two years later, I won the women's open national champi-onships in 2007 and 2008. I watched the international pros do tricks like rocket roll, nose press, riders, blind judge. And I never dare use day 1 would do those tricks. I am still in my way to getting there but I will never stop trying. No matter how many times I smack my face, cheeks, knees, elbow and back on that dense water, I will not stop trying.

Great accomplishment

Joining the first national competition and finishing third was a great accomplishment for me at 36. But that was not the end. As Camarines Sur Gov. Lray Villafuerte set his sights on hosting the world championships, he asked me if hoping a Filipino would be on the podium with the pros. So he pushed all of us riders to go beyond. We joined national championships every year and international competitions.

As women of the world championship race weeks ago, Camarines Sur was visited by hundreds of foreign riders, particularly those competing for medals and wanting to try a new sport. There were also the pro-team practicing for the world title. I saw tricks I couldn't even identify. I met the best of the best in Cam Sur, made friends with them, partied with and learned from them.

That's the world competition—a gathering of friends who share the passion for wakeboarding. These international pro riders may not even remember me, yet I am proud to say I competed in the world championships with among the best in the world like Nick Taylor, No. 1 wake skater; Tom Fowler, No. 1 cable rider, and Shane Watson, No. 1 boat rider.

I was hoping to be in the women's master's division by 35 years old, but unfortunately I was five only competitors above 31, as they put me in the women 18 years and above category. After two days of training, my body already ached and I could not do the many tricks. If I was only 18, I'd be way better than I am now. But here many 50-year-old women can run from arms' throw kicks, they can still compete in cable wakeboarding!

Secret society

It was not only I who was part of this "secret society," as you might call the people obsessed with wakeboarding. My son, Blade, 7, was the youngest male competitor in the world championships. He couldn't tackles going over the ramps at first but after watching the other kids and pros, he decided that for his last trick, he would try hitting the kicker.

My son, hit the left corner of the kicker and rode off unscathed. He had the biggest smile on his face when he received his trophy for third place in the boys' 8-years-old-and-under category.

The best part was the after-house events. Aside from the trophies that prove you were a competitor, dog tags and bullet IDs, the best part was sharing stories with the foreign riders. The Thais, who were the only riders from Southeast Asia, are now part of my circle of great friends. So are those from Florida, Canada, Germany.

The author placed fourth, women's division, in the Cimbar Wake Championship last July 4-7, the highest-ranked Filipina in the international event.

ENTERTAINMENT

Website: www.inquirer.net/entertainment

Editor Bernie C. Velarde

Barretto sisters' understanding

CLAUDINE BARRETTO, PERSISTENT GOOD HOUSEKEEPING exemplar and nurture adepts of a centered alternation with Angel Locsin: "[When you become a mother] your priorities... change... like yours another person. You want to instill the right values in your kids... be a good example." She and husband Raymart Santiago have 5 children, Julitta and Santino. Claudine and sisters Gretchen and Marjorie have one "memory" understanding: "[Hindi kami nakikialam] how each of us raises our kids."

Goodbye, reality search, hello 'reality hosting'

By Jayson B. Rotoyla
Correspondent

THERE'S A NEW PHENOMENON ON LATE night TV that's keeping more and more Filipinos awake: live, text-based game shows.

Aired on ABC-5 and MBS-CBN, the shows are easy to miss — or dismiss— especially if you prefer watching more feasible talk shows both.

A closer look, though, may get you hooked.

First of all, there's the prospect of winning. The games are easy... various round, brain or picture puzzles are flashed on-screen for viewers to solve. To join the contest, viewers only need to text in special codes for the chance to answer the puzzles on-air.

Spontaneity

The spontaneity is also interesting. The shows feature unknown hosts, are almost devoid of production values, feature no sexy models or skimpily clad back-up dancers, and don't seem to have a script.

And the ultimate TV blasphemy? There are no commercial breaks.

Yes you can imagine how damning non-stop broadcast can be for a host. Well, not all. It turns out, if there's anything that keeps ABC 5's "Text 2 Win" (Mondays to Sundays, 11 p.m. to 1 a.m.) interesting, it's host Iya Fernandez.

Her cutesy, mass appeal and oftentimes comic way of anchoring are the program's main points of interest.

A big part of her job involves convincing

Late-night text-based game shows break broadcasting norms

GOODBYE D2

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HANCOCK – PG13 1:50, 4:00, 6:10, 8:20, 10:30	WANTED'S – R13 12:50, 2:15, 3:40, 9:00, 10:30	MAMMA MIA – PG13 1:10, 3:40

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GALLERIA

1 MAMMA MIA!
2 MAMMA MIA!
3 MAMMA MIA!
4 HANCOCK
5 JOURNEY to the CENTER of the EARTH
6 WANTED
7 MY MONSTER MOM
8 indieSine: BARAKO
8 KAMBYO
8 THE WARLORDS

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JULY 09 TO 15

ERMITA

1 MAMMA MIA!
2 MY MONSTER MOM
3 MAMMA MIA!
4 HANCOCK
5 JOURNEY to the CENTER of the EARTH
6 THE WARLORDS
7 MAMMA MIA!
8 KAMBYO
9 WANTED

METRO EAST

1 MY MONSTER MOM
2 HANCOCK
3 MAMMA MIA!
4 JOURNEY to the CENTER of the EARTH
5 WANTED
6 MAMMA MIA!
7 THE WARLORDS
8 KAMBYO

NOVALICHES

1 HANCOCK
2 JOURNEY to the CENTER of the EARTH
3 THE WARLORDS
4 MAMMA MIA!

PIONEER

1 JOURNEY to the CENTER of the EARTH
2 HANCOCK
3 MAMMA MIA!
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2 THE WARLORDS
3 FORBIDDEN KINGDOM
4 HANCOCK
5 MAMMA MIA!

LIPA

1 HANCOCK
2 GET SMART
3 WANTED
4 MY MONSTER MOM
5 MAMMA MIA!

DASMARIÑAS

1 HANCOCK
2 THE WARLORDS
3 JOURNEY to the CENTER of the EARTH
4 MAMMA MIA!

IMUS

1 MAMMA MIA!
2 JOURNEY to the CENTER of the EARTH
3 THE WARLORDS
4 HANCOCK

ANGELES

1 HANCOCK
2 MAMMA MIA!
3 MY MONSTER MOM
4 WANTED / SUPERHERO MOVIE

STARMILLS

1 MAMMA MIA!
2 ALONE
3 MY MONSTER MOM
4 SUPERHERO MOVIE
5 HANCOCK
6 WANTED

BACOLOD

1 JOURNEY to the CENTER of the EARTH
2 HANCOCK
3 MAMMA MIA!
4 WANTED
5 SEX AND THE CITY
6 ALONE

ILOILO

1 JOURNEY to the CENTER of the EARTH
2 MY MONSTER MOM
3 MAMMA MIA!
4 HANCOCK
5 ALONE
6 WANTED

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Goodbye...

Front page D1

viewers to vote in. She has an arsenal of approaches. She's downcountry a jovial friend, prudence cupcake; soulful encouragement, or a eyepopping cacophony for those who refuse to heed her call. Whichever mode she picks, she keeps it straight face.

Priceless moment

"Hello. How are you kindergarten kr. Oh, thank Belang dang tao ako. Bye-bye. Bayo magmi ko na. Sino ang gusting manalo? Bum-ba? Kow? Gum-bo? Bigyan ng pera. Kayo mag-text ko," she would say, looking at the camera with the most inferior line.

It's a priceless TV moment. Goodbye, reality talent searches, hello "reality-hunting."

The show has its downsides, though because the camera has nowhere else to go but the host's face, it can get boring. The cut has fake-stems of the city and chipmunk-furnishing. Hey, Bayo could do with a more clever stylist and a bigger wardrobe.

ABS-CBN's "Gamers Update Live" [midnight] is more technically proficient. It's flashy, with animated backgrounds, upbeat music, and fresh-like remote video programs.

Similarities

Like "Live 3 Why," "Update" has the same casual conclusion. But that's as far as similarities go.

Ilan Jaynare Joaquin's style is very much like that of a video jock. Plus, she's nicely made-up and styled. (She's actually a radio jock, DJ Lalla of WRR 101.9 FM.) She's good at ad-libbing, in very relaxed manners, and seems to has some clues cues on reader presentation quips or awkward moments.

She has another advantage: "Gamers Update Live" has breaks in the form of ABS-CBN program plugs.

The show, which normally ended in fourth season, also has brisk pacing. But it also has drawbacks. Sometimes there are "making money from" edgiform downloads. Which explains why these shows survive — and thrive — even without advertising support.

Who knows? The format may actually evolve into a new way of generating income for other TV shows.

The shows are easy to miss, but can also get you hooked with the prospect of winning

SHANG CINEPLEX

1 MAMMA MIA PG-13 2:00, 4:30, 7:00, 9:30

2 MAMMA MIA PG-13 1:30, 4:00, 6:30, 9:00

3 JOURNEY PG 12:10, 2:10, 5:00, 7:20, 9:50

4 HANCOCK PG-13 1:45, 4:30, 6:10, 8:30

MAMMA MIA PG-13 3:00, 5:30, 8:00

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CHEER FACTOR

PLANNING to watch "Mamma Mia!"? One way west to check out Robinsons cinemas where, no less, song hits are everlike subtitles, so moviegoers singalong if you intend to take full advantage, bring a friend—that should be more fun than singing solo.

'Lipstick Jungle' comes on strong

LAST MONDAY, JUNE 30, WE CAUGHT the first telecast of "Lipstick Jungle" on the local premiere channel. Teh reside it a point not to take the new series' premiere episode because the show is top-billed by Brooke Shields, whose real-life serial career we've followed since she was a child actress.

Last praised for her star turns in "Suddenly Susan," Shields now plays a movie studio executive who's also one hot psychologically crossdressed for husband.

While the series details this unhappy relationship, it really is more interested in the deep and supportive friendship between the movie executive and two other upwardly mobile women: a top magazine editor, Nikki Reilly, and a hot designer, Victory Ford.

Season "heroines"? But is, "Lipstick Jungle" is more than just "Sex and the City" for older and more powerful women. It's less concerned with both titillating and liberating sex, and more focused on what women can do-if, or they've broken through the traditional "glass ceiling."

All three surreal characters have already made their mark in their respective, ultra-competitive worlds. But, it is quickly revealed that there's a bigger struggle ahead: How they can hold on to the top-executive territory they've already claimed.

In the series' very first episode, all three characters' main conflicts are briskly brought on, presumably to be more dynamically dealt with in succeeding episodes.

The movie executive's unemployed husband almost walks out on their marriage. The editor realizes that she could be replaced,...and goes to bed with a younger man (are the two events psychologically related?). And the designer is swept off her feet by one of the wealthiest men in the US.

Best of both worlds

In ALL of these developing stories, a consistent theme is women's attitude toward power—and how it in turn affects their view of love.

In an ideal universe, the series appears to say, most career women want the best of both worlds—a great career and love in overflowing abundance! But, as the show's female protagonists quickly discover, it's difficult, if not impossible, to successfully pull off that high-wire balancing act.

An interesting twist is provided by the 40-ish Victory, instead of enjoying her wealthy suitor's overtures, is turned off by them. Her explanation for her unexpected reaction is instructive: "I don't want to be wanted...I want to want myself."

That New Woman declaration of freedom indicates how much traditional male-female relations are currently in dynamic flux. It hits at the core of these relations, but leaves it to individual couples to figure out its specifics in their own relationships.

On point of performance, the designer has the most visually interesting scenes, but it's still Shields' film executive character who holds stage center. This is due to the fact that her character deals with the toughest issues and challenges, while her two female buddies...fully with younger lovers and soap-actor fathers down that flop.

Add to this Shields' stronger acting now, and the series' central focus is finely established. Sees the get-go. It is a concrete jungle out there, but she and her friends have each other. Speak to me in the daily struggle for dominance and their separate the empowered women from the tempering girls—and the male wrestling/salve-get in their way.

'Kung Sukol'

AFTER ITS premiere telecast on Myx Music Channel last July 1, "Kung Sukol," Ogie Alcasid's first single from his "The Great Filipino Songbook" album, is now being played regularly on Myx. "Kung Sukol" was composed by Marvin (Vic) Sotto and was first recorded by Pablo Gallinas.

"The Great Filipino Songbook" is Ogie's tribute to Pinoy composers and singers. To note for Ogie, was Myx (Ogie's) first (upon) [illegible] in 2006.

'The Clone Wars'

"STAR Wars" takes on a dazzling new look in the first-ever animated feature from Lucasfilm Animation—"Star Wars: The Clone Wars." In the aftermath of fiery, Anakin Skywalker and Ashoka Tano are on a mission with his swashbuckling associates, but Count Dooku and his henchmen will stop at nothing to fill their heroic quest.